MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

CAPTAIN AMERICA®

VOLUME 7

CAPTAIN AMERICA Nos. 149-159

GERRY CONWAY, STEVE ENGLEHART & SAL BUSCEMA

MARVEL

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PRESENTS

VOLUME 7

COLLECTING

CAPTAIN AMERICA Nos. 149-159

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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Nos. 149-159

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INTRODUCTION
BY STEVE ENGLEHART

So I asked myself, "Who is Captain America?"

He was a character forged from the red-hot (and white, and blue) passions of some young Americans when world war had begun. Joe Simon and Jack Kirby conceived that iconic image of Cap slugging Hitler in the jaw, *before* America had even entered the war. In the rough and tumble world at the beginning of comics, Cap flared brightly, because of who he was and because Simon and Kirby were among the best creators comics had to offer. Their work was distinctive and so was Cap.

But they got a better offer from DC and left Cap—who didn't suffer unduly while the war raged on. But once the impetus for Cap was finished in 1945, it wasn't long before he was too. He was an artifact of his time.

In the 1950s, in the midst of a fevered cold war with a new enemy, Cap was resurrected as a jingoistic Commie-hunter, and again, he had a top-flight artist in Johnny Romita Sr. But Cap was an artifact of a time now ten years gone. The '50s Cap disappeared quickly.

In the 1960s, with Marvel becoming MARVEL, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby tried out an imposter Cap. Response was positive enough to bring the "real" Cap into *The Avengers*, with the story of his having been frozen solid since the end of World War II. (There was no mention of his '50s incarnation, as we shall see). But the point here is, anything Marvel put before the public, the public devoured, and when they put Cap out there, he became a star. That unfrozen Cap was an artifact of a new time: the Marvel Age.

And so Cap got half of *Tales of Suspense*, alongside Iron Man. His strip chronicled untold tales of WWII for a while, until reader demand for the guy they were seeing in *Avengers* caused the *TOS* strip to jump to the mid-'60s present. In the late '60s, Marvel took all their half-book strips and gave them full books, and so once again, there was a *Captain America* comic. And all was well…except…

(1) Stan and Jack had been associated with three characters from the '40s who were reborn in the '60s. One was the Human Torch, who became a completely different character. One was the Sub-Mariner, who was essentially the same. And the other was Cap, who was…well, essentially the same, only not. His comics bio said he was the same, but he hung with the other heroes of the Marvel Age and that made him modern. (Subby didn't hang with anybody.) Cap was a hybrid, of old and new, and as it happened, Stan and Jack were the ones who would buy that duality more directly than anyone else. And so, over time, *Captain America* lost the sharp focus that other Stan-and-Jack books, and indeed, other Marvel books in general, were exhibiting all around it. Things happened, but nothing really stuck.

(2) The Marvel Age was coexistent with the Civil Rights era, and Stan believed in such things, so he added Marvel's first black American super hero, the Falcon, to the mix. The idea, no doubt, was to make Cap "relevant," that great hope of the era, but for better or worse, Stan's belief in equality didn't translate into much knowledge of the black experience. (And I can say that because I had the same problem, as we shall see.) The Falcon was enjoyable, but no more, yet still he earned equal billing as of #134, giving us *Captain America and The Falcon*.

(3) The Marvel Age was coexistent with the Vietnam War, which most of Marvel's potential audience detested. A significant number of people saw Cap as the living symbol of an America they did not buy into, and that was enough—when added to the dilution of Cap's star power by the addition of a co-star, and the generally generic approach to Cap's adventures—to produce disappointing sales numbers on *Captain America and The Falcon*.

Stan left the book with #141, and Gary Friedrich took over in #142, but sales did not improve.

Thus, we arrive at this *Masterworks*.

Cap has taken on the "civilian" identity of a New York policeman, where he's continually berated by Sgt. Muldoon, just as he was continually berated by his Army Sgt. Duffy back in 1941.

The Falcon is trying to devote his life to his people, but he's continually berated as an Uncle Tom by his militant girlfriend, Leila. Both he and Cap seem to want to live on the streets, among the people, *and* be super heroes. Again, we have the uneasy mix of two ideas, where nothing of real import happens in either reality because both realities are compromised.

With #149, the book went to Gerry Conway. (The book he gave up to take on *Cap* was *Amazing Adventures*, starring The Beast, and the truly lucky guy who took that one over was me. Thus, I began my super hero career the same time this collection begins—a point relevant only because I'll get *Cap* next, in just four months, as we shall see.) But here and now in *Cap*, Gerry is doing his best to make the book work, and he brings a villain new to this book, The Stranger, from the *Thor* universe. This led nicely into #150, which needed to be big to match its big round number, and was, with a plot far outside the usual Cap universe. Gerry moved the romance subplot along as well.

With #151, Cap and Falc's world grew darker and more important. The villains were operating with a fine complexity of motive.

The follow-up, #152, boasted a new, more exciting cover logo. It also boasted more romantic subplot, and the advent of a major new villain, Morgan, and the disgrace of Sgt. Muldoon. Gerry was *doing* something with the book, at least in my eyes as a guy standing just inside the doorway of the Marvel U, writing one bi-monthly book.

And then, Editor in Chief Roy Thomas pulled me aside and told me Gerry was moving on. Apparently, the eyes of those people who weren't reading *Cap* were not so delighted. The book was right on the verge of a major contraction, either to bi-monthly status, or complete cancellation. And how would I like to write it?

I would love to write it, thank you very much.

So Roy said to me the words I've probably quoted in half the interviews I've ever done: "We have no time for extensive edits. If you can make it sell and turn it in on time, you can keep doing it. If you can't, we'll fire you and find someone who can." These days, I find, many people cannot grasp the concept of Marvel just handing me *Captain America* and letting me do whatever I wanted with it. These days, that would not happen. But in those days, it was standard operating procedure. A guy with three bi-monthly super hero stories to his name was given total control over Captain Freaking America, told it was probably a suicide mission, and let loose upon the world, monthly.

That night, I went home, sat down with my *Captain America* collection, which I had bought with my own money like any other fanboy to this point, and did what seemed natural to me. I re-read every issue, and took notes. What characters interested me? What subplots hadn't been resolved to my satisfaction? And what was—or should be—the essence of *Captain America* (*and The Falcon*)?

That night I came to the very same conclusions I just outlined, about how Cap had lost his way. No one writer had done it, or even intended to do it; it was, to my mind, simply that people had always looked at him as something from another era, *and so* not *supposed* to be as much *ours* as all the other Marvel heroes. Cap was an icon. Cap was from the 1940s. Cap was both alien and untouchable.

The result was, he could have been Daredevil, only less interesting, because we knew everything there was to know about the character of Daredevil. With Cap, there was always a gap. He had lived in an era we didn't know. Was there anything that could bridge that gap and connect his first era to his second? Well, he did have that flag on his chest…

But to go there, I'd have to say that the flag stood for something special, and that was not a popular position in the midst of the Vietnam War. I mean, I could just "say" it—"America is great, and I, Captain America, believe that"—but all I'd get was a character very few readers would like, *and* it would just make him Daredevil with an attitude. That didn't solve anything.

But y'know, that flag could also stand for the American *ideals*…the part of America that most Americans believe in. It wouldn't then matter that the American *reality* had gone wrong. Whatever the people in the current America were doing, the spirit of America *was* something special, and it transcended the current time.

In fact, by transcending the era, it was just as valid in 1940, when Cap was created. Our post-war picture of America in WWII was a platoon of guys from all different backgrounds coming together to defend America because they all believed in the one spirit, because it included them all. (Again, I speak of WWII spirit, not WWII reality.) American *ideals* could be the thread that ran through Cap's complete history.

What if, I wondered, Captain America stopped pretending he didn't have a flag on his chest? Not by "saying" it, but by acting like someone who really believed it.

The next day, back in the Bullpen, Roy offered a concept that his new writer might use to get started: "Who was the Captain America of the 1950s, while our Cap was supposedly frozen?" I got stats of the 1950s Cap stories (there were no *Masterworks* then), and added them to my growing picture of Captain America. The absolute difference between the spirit of the American ideal and the spirit of Commie-smashing was perfect for what I wanted, and I ran with Roy's query.

So now there's just one last thing. Having just read my entire *Cap* collection, I was very aware of how Cap's story flowed from issue to issue over many years, even as the creative teams changed. Were it not so, we'd have no character of Captain America at all, just a series of miniseries. So I was totally down with picking up Cap's story exactly where it was, and letting his transformation into something else be part of my story. It was, on the one hand, risky, because sales were so bad that time was of the essence. But on the other hand, I had to believe that people would like seeing Cap make progress. And in those days, when we sold 150,000 copies of the *bad* books just on readily accessible newsstands and drugstore racks every month, word of mouth was a powerful force. If people started talking about Cap, his book could change its fortunes pretty quickly.

As we shall see.

#153—all of the above went on in my brain after #152 was written, but one of the prime directives was "turn it in on time," and so #153 showed up right on cue. Nick Fury had been bubbling through the previous stories, and I wanted that out of the way, so I figured, let's not just tie it off, let's tie it off with spectacle. And not just spectacle, but character-revealing dialogue. I mean, I ended up building a career on something, and that's pretty much it, right there at the start.

But let's be clear: this was my fourth story as a comics pro, and there were still plenty of things for me to learn. For example, on pages 9 and 11, I decided, when dialoguing the art My Pal Sal Buscema had drawn exactly the way I'd asked him to in my plot, that I could make my story better by changing it—in a way that would not match what he'd drawn. So, I cut out the panels I didn't like and used my rudimentary art skills to draw the story I then wanted. Can *you* spot a few figures that just somehow don't look like a real pro's stuff?

Fortunately, this was before Marvel gave art back and artists sold it, or I'd have cost My Pal a chunk of change at a con.

And I note that I had no more experience being black than any of the previous writers. But I did have the Falcon carry the book by himself. He *was* the co-star.

#154—We get to know Steve Rogers, the man—and we keep getting to know Sam Wilson, a man of the streets who's also a man of the Avengers mansion. (I would take over *Avengers* the following month; I think, in a weird way, this was my audition.)

#155—First, all hail Sal Buscema, for what's become an iconic cover.

Steve and Sharon, those two blonds, are supposed to be sunburned, a point made on page 4, but somebody at the coloring center up in Connecticut "fixed it" for us on most of the early pages. Lotsa moving parts in the comics biz.

We learn who this Commie-hating, bigoted Cap really is…in a way that makes us understand him, if not actively sympathize. I'm a comics geek, of course, so I loved using the 1950s reprint pages.

#156—"See if androids have legal rights in Florida." A joke, then.

Hmm. Sgt. Muldoon is still bubbling along in his subplot. Seems like that would have wrapped up by now.

I wanted to have the final battle at an actual landmark in Miami, so I actually called the tourist bureau down there to get a suggestion and some photos.

I could write "I'd like to be alone…" with the best of them.

#157—I forget why I couldn't do all the dialogue for this one. Probably adjusting to all the books I was picking up. And I'm guessing that I wrote through page 10, just because that was stuff I needed to keep exactly on track. But at any rate, probably with page 11, Steve "Baby" Gerber took over the dialoguing. Now, Steve had been an ad man (if not a Mad Man) in St. Louis before becoming a comics writer in New York, and the Viper, in his hands, became one himself.

When Cap returns, the clear relettering in his proclamations indicates that either my original explanation, or Gerber's telling of it, did not pass Roy's muster.

#158—So I came back to the authorial duties and discovered that the Viper spoke ad-ese. I spoke ad-ese about as naturally as I spoke black, so I probably worked as hard dialoguing him as anything else in this issue.

With one exception. I worked very hard on Cap's struggle on pages 2 and 3, and I really wanted to end it with Cap gasping "Damn! I did it!" or something really intense like that. But to use the word "damn" then required Stan's okay, and Stan said no. Not in keeping with the Marvel vibe, and of course he was right, but I was still new enough to bump that boundary for the first time.

Then came Cap's sudden increase in strength. This was another of Roy's ideas, along the same lines as turning the Beast from gray to blue, and giving the Sub-Mariner leathers—in all cases, the editor in chief trying to goose sales of the character involved. But, to make a long story short, by the next issue of *Cap*, it had became clear that sales had skyrocketed and weren't coming back down. Yes, between #153 and #159, *Cap* went from facing cancellation to Marvel's Number One book. Therefore, we didn't need to change Cap, and very shortly we let that whole extra-strength thing just fade away, unmentioned.

But Muldoon doesn't fade. Where could this be going?

#159—Here. And suffice it to say that this wasn't what his creators had expected from him. But we were refurbishing everything for the new *Captain America*.

So that wraps up the first transitional period in Cap's life, and the Falcon's, and it seemed to go pretty well. But once Sal and I started rolling, we never stopped, so upcoming Cap *Masterworks* will feature Cap vs. another figure out of the 1950s, the Yellow Claw, and unspool the famous Watergate/Secret Empire epic. Reserve your copy at your favorite newsstand now, pilgrim!

2013

Steve Englehart these days writes the Max August *novels, where the American ideal is a blunt object in the hands of some very bad people.*

CAPT. AMERICA

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

THEY'RE BACK!! BATROC'S BRIGÄDE!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

ALL THE COLORS ... OF EVIL!

SOFT: THE SOUNDS OF EVENING... THE CLATTER OF GARBAGE CANS, THE HUSHED TAPPING OF FADING FOOTSTEPS, THE BRIEF RUMBLE OF A DISTANT TRUCK...

...AND, NEARER: OTHER SOUNDS, AUDIBLE ONLY TO TRAINED EARS... THE SLAMMING OF CAR DOORS, THE SCUFFLING OF A SUDDEN STRUGGLE, AND A FAINT, PLAINTIVE CRY FOR... HELP!

SAVINGS AND LOAN

THERE, REDWING -- UNLESS I'M IMAGINING THINGS IN MY OLD AGE--

--SOMEONE WAS JUST PULLED INTO THAT MINIBUS, AND IF THAT MEANS WHAT I THINK IT DOES--

WE'VE GOT TO MOVE--FAST!

STAN LEE • EDITOR / GERRY CONWAY • WRITER
SAL BUSCEMA • ARTIST / JIM MOONEY • INKER
SHELLY LEFERMAN • LETTERER

8617

HIS MIND MOVES QUICKLY, PROBING ALL POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION, LIGHTING ON ONE, AND IN THE INSTANT OF DECISION, ACTING...

REDWING! GO!

FOLLOW THAT VAN--AND WHATEVER YOU DO, BROTHER--

--DON'T LET IT OUT OF YOUR SIGHT!

AND DOES THE HAWK CRY IN ANSWER? OR IS IT THE UN-THINKING CRY OF A HUNTING ANIMAL--?

SKREE EE!

THIS MAN DOESN'T QUESTION--TO HIM, IT MATTERS LITTLE, THESE QUESTIONS OF THOUGHT AND ANTHROPOMORHISM--

FOR HIM, THE EVENING'S SEARCH IS ALMOST OVER--A SEARCH THAT HAS TAKEN HIM EAST AND WEST OVER THE ROOFTOPS OF HARLEM--

--HE IS THE FALCON, AND TONIGHT--FOR NOW--HE FIGHTS ALONE!

ALONE, THAT IS, BUT FOR REDWING--

--REDWING, THE ONLY WITNESS TO AN UNCANNY TRANSFORMATION IN THE SHADOWS OF A TRASH-ENCRUSTED ALLEY--

MOVE, YOU FOOLS--OR DIDN'T YOU SEE WHO'S ON OUR TAIL?

I TOLD YOU WE SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED WITH THAT LAST KID--I TOLD YOU!

CRIPES, CAN'T THIS BUGGY CHECK OUT ANY FASTER?

A-507

BUG OFF, GUNNER! WE'RE LUCKY IT JIVES AT ALL.

--REDWING, A MUTE WITNESS TO WHAT HAS OCCURED--

--UNABLE TO RELAY THE INFORMATION HE'S GATHERED, EVEN AS THE FALCON ARRIVES A MOMENT TOO LATE --

--AND BECAUSE OF IT, SEES ONLY AN INNOCENT VOLKSWAGEN--

--WHERE, IF REDWING COULD SPEAK--

--THE FALCON WOULD HAVE SEEN MUCH MORE!

SKREE!

I KNOW, FRIEND. WE'VE LOST THEM

THAT REALLY BURNS YOU, DOESN'T IT?

WELL, TAKE IT EASY, LITTLE BROTHER.

OLD SAM WILSON AIN'T LETTING UP FOR HOURS YET. I'LL FIND THAT BLASTED VAN-- EVEN IF I HAVE TO SEARCH TILL DAWN.

WE'LL HAVE TIME ENOUGH LATER TO EXAMINE THE FALCON'S REASONS FOR WANTING TO FIND THAT MINIBUS--AND ITS MYSTERIOUS PASSENGERS--

--RIGHT NOW, LET'S TURN TO SHIELD HQ, WHERE A CERTAIN BROODING AVENGER IS EXAMINING THE PATH HIS LIFE'S BEEN FOLLOWING--

--AND FINDING THAT PATH--WANTING!

JUST THE MAN I'VE BEEN LOOKIN' FOR--

WHO--? FURY! GOOD LORD, MAN--YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT THAT KIND OF STUNT CAN NET YOU A BROKEN ARM!

ESPECIALLY FROM AN OLD CRUST LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA, RIGHT?

DON'T HAND ME THAT BIG MAN ROUTINE, CAP... 'CAUSE WHEN YOU LAY IT ON THE LINE, I'D GIVE EVEN ODDS A GUY NAMED NICK FURY COULD LICK YA WITH HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS!

WHICH IS KINDA WHY I'M HERE, MISTER--

--WE'RE A LOT ALIKE, YOU'N ME.

--A PAIR O' JOES CAUGHT OUT OF OUR TIME.

WHEN WE WERE KIDS, THE BIG THREAT WAS A CRAZY AUSTRIAN NAMED SCHICKELGRUBER...

...AND THE ATOM BOMB WAS SUMTHIN' YOU READ ABOUT IN DIME MAGAZINES!

WHAT I'M TRYIN' TO SAY, AVENGER, IS THIS:

WE WORK GOOD TOGETHER, CAP--REAL GOOD--

--SO HOW ABOUT HOOKIN' UP WITH ME'N SHIELD... PERMANENTLY?

NICK, NOTHING WOULD PLEASE ME MORE... YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE THAT!

WHAT'A YA MEAN, YOU CAN'T?

BUT-- THE SIMPLE FACT IS, I CAN'T!

JUST THAT, NICK. I'VE GOT A FRIEND... A PARTNER...WHO'S DEPENDING ON ME MORE THAN EITHER OF US REALIZE.

I CAN'T WALK OUT ON THE FALCON, NICK...

THERE'S JUST NO WAY!

YEAH? WELL, MAYBE YOU THINK THAT SETTLES IT, BIG MAN--

--MAYBE YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP WALTZIN' IN HERE LIKE THE PLACE WAS YOURS--

--BUT BUSTER-- THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG!

A MAN'S GOT TO MAKE COMMITMENTS, FRIEND--OTHERWISE HE'S A LEACH-- A BLASTED PARASITE!

THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DISHIN' OUT, PAL--

--AND MISTER, I HAVE HAD IT!

FURY, WHAT--!

EASY, NICK... JUST CALM DOWN!

I'M NOT ABOUT TO FIGHT YOU...WE'VE GONE THROUGH TOO MUCH TO END IT LIKE THAT!

MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO END IT SOME OTHER WAY, AVENGER--?

AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE BIG MAN!

SOMETHING'S EATING FURY...! UNLESS I BACK OFF, HE'LL DRAG US BOTH INTO A BRAWL.

AND I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN ...NOT TO US!

WHAT'SA' MATTER, ROGERS? LOST FOR WORDS?

WELL, I'M NOT, MISTER--

--I'VE GOT TWO OF 'EM:

GET OUT, PAL!

IF YOU DON'T NEED SHIELD--

--THEN SHIELD DOESN'T NEED YOU!

I DON'T GET IT! COULD IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH--

VAL--AND SHARON CARTER. MAYBE THEY CAN--

--UH-OH-- THE INTER-COM!

ATTENTION: THIS IS FURY. AS OF NOW, CAPTAIN AMERICA IS OFF-LIMITS TO ALL SHIELD PERSONNEL--

HE IS TO RECEIVE NO COOPERA-TION!

--I REPEAT: NO COOPERATION!

ANY SHIELD OPERATIVE FOUND DEALING WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL GET A PERSONAL REPRIMAND FROM ME--

AND THIS APPLIES SPECIFICALLY TO AGENT 13! THIS IS FURY: OUT!

SOON, IN THE BARBER SHOP SHIELD KEEPS AS A "FRONT" FOR THEIR EXITING AGENTS...

CAP, I'M SORRY-- BUT I CAN'T--!

IT'S OKAY, JOE. THANKS FOR GIVING ME A RIDE ON YOUR PNEUMATIC CHAIR, AT ANY RATE.

MAYBE WHEN NICK GENTLES DOWN...I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN!

PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE SAID --"IF NICK GENTLES DOWN."

WHATEVER'S BUGGING HIM SEEMS TO HAVE BITTEN **DEEP**... AND THAT KIND OF BURN DOESN'T EASE UP **QUICKLY!**

IN THE MEANTIME... SHARON AND I WILL HAVE TO STOP **SEEING** EACH OTHER...

...NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE NEED... OR **WANT** TO.

STEPPING AWAY FROM THE SHADOWED STOREFRONT, HE MOVES ALONG THE TWILIT STREETS, HIS THOUGHTS WINDING IN EVER TIGHTENING **SPIRALS**...

...SPIRALS WHICH KEEP **RE-TURNING** HIM TO UNEASY MEMORIES...THOUGHTS OF SHARON...OF THE GIRL AGENT CALLED **VAL**...

PAWN SHO

THOUGHTS WHICH BREAK OFF MINUTES LATER AS HE PASSES A DARKENED **PAWN SHOP**, AND REALIZES...

THE **TIME**...! I'D ALMOST **FORGOTTEN**...

"NO MATTER **WHAT** CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PERSONAL PROBLEMS MAY BE, STEVE ROGERS **STILL** HAS CERTAIN OBLIGATIONS. SOoooo..."

ROGERS! MAN, YOU MUST LEAD A CHARMED LIFE--

FIVE MINUTES AGO THE SARGE CAME THROUGH HERE LIKE A **TORNADO**-- LOOKING FOR **YOU**, STEVERINO.

GUESS I'D BETTER **REPORT**... BEFORE HE FINDS ME ON HIS **OWN**!

SARGE... WERE YOU LOOKING FOR **ME**?

HOLD ON A MINUTE TILL I FINISH THIS BLASTED **REPORT**!

YOU'D THINK WE WERE BACK IN **GRADE** SCHOOL-- DOIN' SOME CRUMMY ENGLISH **COMPOSITION**!

NOW WHERE **WUZ** I?

YEAH...ROGERS, SOMEBODY'S **BUCKING** FOR YOU UPSTAIRS. EITHER THAT, OR THE CAPTAIN'S GONE **SOFT** THESE PAST FEW WEEKS...

YOU'VE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO A **PATROL CAR**, ROGERS--

--AND BEFORE YOU DO, DON'T ASK ME **WHY**-- 'CAUSE, ROOKIE-- I'M BLAMED IF I **KNOW**!

BUT DO ME ONE FAVOR, WILL YOU, ROGERS?

DON'T BLOW THIS ASSIGNMENT--I'M KINDA TIRED OF SEEING YOUR UGLY MUTT IN THE DAY ROOM--GET ME?

SGT. MULDOON

SURE, SARGE, I'LL DO MY BEST.

YET AS HE LEAVES THE CLOSE STENCH OF WELL-CHEWED CIGARS, HE CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...

THE WAY MULDOON TALKED TO ME...

...WAS THIS PATROL CAR POST HIS IDEA?

MAYBE I HAVEN'T BEEN FAIR...HE COMES ON HARD, BUT IT MIGHT BE BECAUSE HE HAS TO...

NEW YORK'S A TOUGH TOWN... IT NEEDS TOUGH COPS...

MULDOON'S JOB IS TO MAKE THEM THAT WAY...

AND AS HE SETTLES IN NEXT TO HIS NEW PARTNER, STEVEN ROGERS FEELS A SMILE MOLD HIS FACE...

...AND HE DOES IT, TOO.

TOUGH MEN... BUT GOOD MEN. MEN LIKE MULDOON.

THEN, AS HIS EYES FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT OF MEN AND WOMEN THROUGH THE MIDTOWN THEATER DISTRICT...

APEX NOW SHOWING

...THAT MAN...

I'VE SEEN HIM SOMEWHERE BEFORE, BUT I CAN'T PLACE HIM. SOMETHING ABOUT HIS CLOTHES...?

MAYBE THAT'S IT...THE CLOTHES ARE ALL WRONG!

THINK, ROGERS... LOOK BEYOND THAT SNAP-BRIM HAT, AND THINK...

"...WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THAT MAN BEFORE?"

ENTRANCE

SUNSET THEATRE GROUP

CLASSES

AND AS THE PATROL CAR CONTINUES ITS ROUNDS, THE TALL MAN IN QUESTION ENTERS A NEARBY ALLEY, REACHES FOR A BATTERED WOODEN DOOR...

...AND, MOVING WITH GRACE **STRANGE** FOR ONE SO LARGE...

...HE CLIMBS THE FLIGHT OF WORN STAIRS, PASSING THROUGH YET **ANOTHER** DOOR...!

THERE, IN A ROOM CRISS-CROSSED BY SKYLIGHT-WEBBED **MOONLIGHT**, HE MAKES A QUICK **TRANS-FORMATION**...

HIS MOVEMENTS REVEAL LITHE MUSCLES, A HIDDEN **TENSION** IN EVERY TWIST AND FOLD OF SKIN...UNDER HIS FEET, THE CREAKING BOARDS **BETRAY** HIS WEIGHT... A WEIGHT **UN-LIKELY** FOR HIS **SIZE**...

ZE MOMENT **APPROACHES**... AND, AS EVAIR, I MUST BE **READY** FOR EET.

ZE LAST **SHIPMENT** ARRIVES WITHIN ZE HOUR--

--AND WHEN ZEY COME--ZEY WILL BE MET BY-- **BATROC, ZE LEAPAIR!***

ZE PAST FEW MONTHS--ZE FURTIVE **HIDING**-- SOON, EET WILL ALL BE OVAIR! SOON, BATROC WILL BE HIS OWN **MASTER** ONCE MORE--

--AND **NO** MAN WILL DARE DISOBEY HEEM-- **NO** MAN WILL MOCK HEEM--

--BATROC WILL HAVE ZE POWAIR OVAIR **ALL!****

*THAT'S **BATROC THE LEAPER**, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T SPEAK FRENCH. --STUDIOUS STAN.

AND IF YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT PLOUGHING THROUGH THE LEAPER'S THICK **GALLIC ACCENT-- WAIT TILL YOU CATCH SOME OF OUR FANCY FRENCH **QUOTES**! -- STUDIOUS (BUT WEARY) STAN

EVEN AS I HAVE MASTAIRED ZE ART OF LA *SAVATE*--

--ZE ANCIENT FORM OF COMBAT WITH ZE *FEET*--

WHOMP!

--SO TOO WILL I MASTAIR THOSE WHO *OPPOSE* ME--

--AND THOSE I CANNOT *CONTROL*--

--I WILL *STRIKE*-- LIKE I STRIKE ZIS *BAG*--

--AND LIKE ZIS BAG-- *ZEY WILL BE DESTROYED!*

FOR ZAT IS ZE WAY... OF *BATROC!*

ZAT IS ZE WAY... OF *HONAIR.*

BUT *ENOUGH* OF ZESE THINGS. I GROW *TIRED* OF MY VOICE...

MES AMI, *ENTREZ!* WE HAVE NEED TO *PLAN*...

WORDLESS, THEY MOVE SILENTLY INTO THE ROOM, TALL, BROAD MEN WHOSE EYES TELL OF NO EMOTION...

...WHOSE VERY STANCE IS COLD... COLD AND CRUEL.

AS ALWAYS, MES CHERS, YOUR SILENCE *APPALLS* ME.

DO YOU FIND ZIS AFFAIRE WITHOUT *HUMOR?* NON?

BUT EET IS SO *VERY* AMUSING, MES CHERS AMIS-- YOU OF *BATROC'S BRIGADE*, AND I--ZE LEAPAIR HIMSELF--HIRED BY A MAN WHOSE *NAME* WE DO NOT KNOW--

--HIRED FOR A PURPOSE WE CANNOT *UNDERSTAND!*

IS EET NOT *DROLL?* WE PROVE OURSELVES *SLAVES*, OUI?

WE WHO ARE SO *FREE*-- ARE BUT SERVANTS TO OUR *GREED!* FOR IN ZE END, WE *DO* OBEY ZE DOLLAR, DO WE *NOT*--MES AMI?

A FEW HOURS LATER, AND SOME NINETY-FOUR BLOCKS **UPTOWN**, A WEARY FIGURE DROPS TO A HARLEM TENEMENT **FIRE-ESCAPE**, HIS MIND CHURNING WITH MIXED RAGE...AND **FEAR**...

REDWING, WHENEVER THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND, I GET A LITTLE *SCARED*--

--AND, DARK BROTHER, RIGHT NOW--I'M *MORE* THAN A LITTLE SCARED--

--THIS IS *ONE* DUDE WHO'S CHASING AROUND IN *CIRCLES!*

I MUST HAVE CHECKED OUT EVERY SQUARE *INCH* OF THIRTY BLOCKS--AND IT ALL COMES UP *ZERO!*

WHEREVER THOSE CREEPS --UH-OH.

RINGG!

--THE *PHONE!* AND DON'T I *KNOW* WHAT IT'S ABOUT?

HIS VOICE SOFTENS, AND THE MAN CALLED **FALCON** RETURNS TO SHADOW-LIFE, WHILE **SAM WILSON**, SOCIAL WORKER, RISES GRIMLY TO THE SURFACE...

MRS. SANTIAGO? NO, I *HAVEN'T* FOUND PAUL YET--

--*WHAT?* ANOTHER ONE!

STAY THERE, MRS. SANTIAGO. I'LL BE RIGHT *OVER!*

GOING SOMEWHERE, *MISTER WILSON*? OR MAYBE YOU'VE GOT TIME FOR A FEW PASSING *WORDS*?

LEILA! LOOK, HONEY--I CAN'T--

CAN'T *WHAT*, SWEETHEART? NO TIME FOR LITTLE LEILA?

I WOULDN'T WANT TO STEAL PRECIOUS *MINUTES*--

--NOT FROM YOUR HEROIC *UNCLE* ***TOMMING***-- WHAT?

SHUT *UP*, LEILA! YOU CAN COME IF YOU *WANT* TO--

--BUT IF YOU DO--YOU'LL HAVE TO *HUSTLE!*

*SOON, ON A DIMLIT SIDESTREET NEAR THE **WEST SIDE HIGHWAY**...*

MEESTER WILSON-- OH, MEESTER WILSON, WHAT SHALL WE *DO*?

MY LITTLE *RICO*--NOW HE *TOO* IS GONE--

--THEY *ALL* GO--PAUL, RICO-- EVEN *JUAN!*

EASY, MRS. SANTIAGO. IT'LL BE OKAY, NOW.

TELL ME WHAT ***HAPPENED.***

TELL YOU WHAT IS HAPPENED? HOW CAN I...WHEN I DO NOT UNDER-STAND IT?

FIRST THEY TAKE MY LITTLE PAUL... THAN JUAN, HE TOO VANISHES...

...AND NOW...

PLEASE, MRS. SANTIAGO...

LET'S GO INSIDE. YOU CAN TALK ABOUT IT THERE.

IF THE RATS'LL LET HER GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE!

CUT IT, LEILA.

THE WORDS COME SLOWLY... BUT WHEN THEY DO, THEY TELL A STORY OF HORROR...

...ONE THAT SOFTENS EVEN LEILA'S ANGER... FOR A MOMENT...

...AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'S BEEN ALL WEEK, LEILA.

KIDS'VE BEEN DISAPPEARING ALL OVER HARLEM ...MAYBE IN THE OTHER BOROUGHS TOO, FOR ALL I KNOW.

...VANISHING... INTO THIN AIR!

AND THAT'S ALL YOU CAN SAY?

WHAT MORE IS THERE? THE COPS ARE BAFFLED, HONEY.

THE COPS? YOU EXPECT THEM TO HELP US? BROTHER, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN THE PAST TEN YEARS?

FORGET THEM! WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO, MEESTER WILSON?

I'LL DO WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING, LEILA--

--IN OTHER WORDS --YOU'LL DO NOTHING.

SEEMS I'VE MADE A MISTAKE ABOUT YOU, SAM WILSON...

I USED TO THINK YOU WERE A MAN!

BLAST IT, WHAT CAN I TELL HER? THAT I'LL KEEP TRACKING THEM...AS THE FALCON?

SOMETIMES I THINK I SHOULD CHUCK THE WHOLE DEAL...

...JUST FORGET IT...

...AND MAYBE...START OVER AGAIN.

THUS, IT'S ONE VERY HOT SAM WILSON WHO RETURNS TO HIS OFFICE A FEW MINUTES LATER, TO FIND...

YOU!

WELFARE OFFICE

FINALLY GOT MY MESSAGE, HUH? THANKS A LOT, FRIEND.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT "MESSAGE" YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, SAM --I HAVEN'T BEEN BACK TO MY HOTEL--

--BUT BELIEVE ME, SOMETHING'S COME UP THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT--!

SOMETHING I SAW IN THE THEATER DISTRICT--

STOW, IT, CAP.

IF YOU'RE HERE TO GRAB MY HELP BATTLIN' SOME SUPER-BADDIE, YOU'VE COME TO THE WRONG JOE!

THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING TO MY PEOPLE, CAP--

--AND WHAT GOES DOWN WITH THE BROTHERS IS WHAT'S ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW!

I'VE GOT MY OWN GAME TO PLAY, CAP...

...SO RIGHT NOW, I CAN'T PLAY YOURS!

I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, SAM.

MAYBE LATER WE'LL GET A CHANCE TO TALK...

...BUT LIKE YOU, I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND.

I THOUGHT I RECOGNISED A MAN A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO--DOWN ON 46TH STREET--

--NOW THAT I'M OFF-DUTY, IT SEEMS LIKE A GOOD IDEA TO CHECK IT OUT--

--WHICH I WILL-- AND IF IT'S A DUD-- I'LL BE BACK TO HELP YOU, FRIEND.

THANKS, CAP.

NO PROBLEM, OLD BUDDY.

AND, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE STAYED TO HEAR SAM OUT---

BUT AFTER WHAT I REMEMBERED A LITTLE WHILE AGO, THIS JUST COULDN'T WAIT--

--'CAUSE UNLESS MY MEMORY'S FALLEN COMPLETELY APART--

--THE MAN I SAW ENTER THIS STUDIO WAS NONE OTHER THAN A CERTAIN FRENCH MERCENARY--!

LIKE A CAT, HE LANDS NOISELESSLY ON THE BALLS OF HIS FEET, LEANING FORWARD --LISTENING FOR SOME TELL-TALE SOUND OF MOVEMENT, UNTIL --

CLICK

AH, EET APPEARS WE HAVE A GUEST. ALLO, MON ENNEMI--

ENFIN, WE MEET AGAIN. PERHAPS ZIS TIME WE MAY AMMEND OUR DIFFAIRENCES?

BATROC!

I THINK WE'VE A SCORE OR TWO TO SETTLE, FRIEND.

BUT OF COURSE. AND YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY, MON CHER--

--EET WILL AMUSE ME TILL ZE TIME FOR PARTING COMES!

UH-UNH, LEAPER! YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!

JE NE SUIS PAS D'ACCORD, MON CHER AMI--

--I DISAGREE!

YOU SEEM IGNORANT OF WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE--

--C'EST DOMMAGE-- IT IS A PITY--BUT I HAVE NO TIME TO EXPLAIN!

THEN DON'T TRY, BATROC --

--I'M IN THE MOOD FOR A REAL FREE-FOR-ALL...AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE IT!

MON CHER CAPITAINE--I AM FLATTERED!

BE AS FLATTERED AS YOU WANT, LEAPER--

--LIKE I SAID, I'M BRINGING YOU IN.

NOW WE TALK LIKE ZE AMERICAIN GANGSTERS, NON?

GOOD-- I LIKE ZIS MELO-DRAMA.

CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT, FRIEND--

--I'M WORKING UP A REAL MAD--

--MY NERVES ARE SHOT...AND I'M TAKING IT OUT ON YOU!

OUI, AS YOU WILL, MON AMI--

WHAM

--AS YOU WILL!

MAYBE YOU'RE GETTING OLD, BATROC...

--THE MAN I KNEW WOULD NEVER HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT MY SHIELD!

NOW TALK, BATROC-- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE--?

I KNOW YOU ...AND YOU SURE HAVEN'T SETTLED DOWN TO OPEN UP A DANCE STUDIO-- UNNNNH!

OUI, ZAT IS TRUE--

--BUT WHAT I AM DOING--YOU SHALL NEVAIR DISCOVAIR!

GUESS AGAIN, BATROC.

BUNNCH!

YOU MET ME ON THE WRONG DAY--

--AFTER WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH THESE PAST FEW HOURS--

--AND FRIEND, THAT'S JUST YOUR BAD LUCK!

--I'M JUST ITCHING TO TAKE SOME-ONE APART!

NOW, SPILL IT, LEAPER...

...OR DO I HAVE TO WALTZ WITH YOU SOME MORE?

NON, DO NOT BOTHAIR, AMI--

--I SEE I HAVE MADE AN ERROR--

--PERHAPS I HAVE FORGOTTEN OUR BATTLES--

--YET NOW I REALIZE--ZE LEAPAIR NEEDS AID--

AU SECOURS!

--AND IN ZIS CASE, ZE HELP COMES IN ZE FORM OF--

--BATROC'S BRIGADE!

SEVEN OF THEM --THAT'S JUST GREAT. LOOKS LIKE A HOPELESS FIGHT--

--FOR ANYONE BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA!

SWINGING HIS SHIELD LIKE A CLUB, HE THROWS HIMSELF INTO THEIR MIDST LIKE A LIVING THUNDERBOLT-- HIS EYES BURNING WITH THE RAGE OF BATTLE--HIS TEETH BARED LIKE SOME PRIMITIVE WARRIOR--

--YET IN EACH MOVEMENT, THERE IS A NOBILITY-- A SENSE OF TIMELESS HONOR--

--AN HONOR THAT FIGHTS ON-- EVEN WHEN THE ODDS, PERHAPS THE VERY WORLD, SEEM SET AGAINST HIM!

NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE DOESN'T FEEL THE BLOW THAT CUTS HIM DOWN...!

AT THAT MOMENT, ON A QUIET STRETCH OF 8TH AVENUE, A LONELY MAN CALLED "DUCKS" STROLLS WEARILY ALONG.

UNDER THE CHEAP PLAID MATERIAL OF HIS JACKET... HIS SHOULDERS MOVE UNEASILY...

...AND PERHAPS, FROM TIME TO TIME, HE GLANCES INTO THE SHADOWS CRAWLING BESIDE HIM... HIS HEAD MOVING FURTIVELY ON A TWISTING NECK...

THEN, HE SIGHS... AND SEEMS TO GROW CALMER. FOR AN INSTANT, HIS WARINESS FADES, AND IN THAT INSTANT...

...HIS DESTINY STRIKES!

ULP!

I'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU, "DUCKS"--

AND, LITTLE STOOLIE, YOU'D BETTER HAVE ANSWERS!

ONE: WHO'S BEEN PICKING KIDS OFF THE STREETS--

TWO: WHY--

AND THREE: WHERE ARE THEY, "DUCKS"? WHERE ARE THEY?

HEY, WAIT-- HEY, DON'T HIT ME, FALCON--

--I'LL TELL YA, I'LL TELL YA!

THERE'S BEEN A LOTTA TALK ABOUT SOME OUT-OF-TOWN COMBINE--

--THE WORD'S TO LIE LOW-- THAT THEY'RE HOLED UP IN A WAREHOUSE ON NINETY-FOURTH STREET--

--THAT THERE'S POWER BEHIND 'EM... REAL POWER!

I SWEAR, BROTHER, THAT'S ALL I KNOW!

NOW COME ON, REDWING-- LET'S GET OUT OF THIS HOLE--

--THE STENCH IS A LITTLE STRONG-- TOO STRONG!

THAT'LL DO, "DUCKS"-- YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE LEAD I NEED!

SOON, SOME EIGHT BLOCKS SOUTH, ON A LONELY MOONLIT ROOFTOP . . .

--DON'T LIKE IT, BOSS. WHY HASN'T HE CALLED US?

GIVE THE MAN TIME, GUNNER. MAYBE HE'S CAUGHT UP IN SOMETHING, Y'KNOW?

YEH, WELL--WHAT IF WE'RE CAUGHT WITH THIS KID, BOSS?

I MEAN, KIDNAPPING'S A LIFE OFFENSE, Y'KNOW?

DON'T SWEAT IT, GUNNER.

IF IT COMES TO THAT--WE WON'T GET CAUGHT WITH THE KID--I PROMISE YOU!

WITH A SNARL OF RAGE, THE GRIM-FACED SHADOW ABOVE LUNGES--

--HIS WEIGHT SNAPS THE RESTRAINING LINKS OF THE ANCIENT GRATING--

--AND BEFORE THE STARTLED MEN BELOW CAN MOVE--

--THE FALCON!

YOU'VE GOT IT, FRIEND.

NOW BEFORE I TEAR YOU THREE APART--WHERE'S THE KID?

FORGET IT, BROTHER--

YOU'LL NEVER FIND HIM--ALIVE!

MISTER, BELIEVE ME--

YOU'D JUST BETTER BE WRONG!

AND AS ABRUPTLY AS IT BEGAN, THE FIGHTING ENDS--

THE OTHERS ARE BOLTING--BUT REDWING'LL KEEP THEM IN SIGHT--

--I ONLY NEED ONE OF THEM, ANYWAY--

--TO DO THIS!

TALK, FRIEND--OR I LET GO--

--AND YOU FALL --SIX FLOORS DOWN!

OKAY, OKAY--THE KID'S IN A VOLKS--ON THE FIRST FLOOR--

GO ON, PAL--WHO'S RUNNING THIS OPERATION--AND WHY?

SOME GUY ON 46TH STREET--HE WAS SUPPOSED TO CALL US--

--WE SEND THE KIDS TO HIM--BELIEVE ME, MISTER--I DON'T KNOW WHY--

--HONEST!

DON'T WORRY, PAL--

--I BELIEVE YOU.

MOMENTS LATER, IN THE STREET-LEVEL GARAGE...

REDWING-- SO THAT WAS WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO TELL ME BEFORE!

THEY MUST HAVE HIDDEN THAT BUG IN THE LARGER VAN!

SERVICE ELEVATOR

BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW.

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO UN-LOCK THIS TRUNK WITH THIS BIT OF WIRE--

DONE!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, KID. YOU CAN COME OUT, NOW.

WOW!

I THOUGHT IT WAS OVER FOR GOOD, MAN... THE WAY THOSE GUYS TALKED...!

JUST TAKE IT EASY, FRIEND-- AND WHEN YOU CATCH YOUR BREATH...

--DO ME A FAVOR AND CALL THE COPS!

AND SOON, A SWINGING FORM LIFTS INTO THE NIGHT--

--AND MOVES TO A FINAL MEETING--WITH DESTINY!

WHILE, IN A CERTAIN ABANDONED DANCE STUDIO IN THE MORE RUN-DOWN SECTOR OF THE THEATER DISTRICT...

LE DETENEZ, MES AMIS--

--HE IS A CLEVER ONE!

YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD WITH ORDERS, BATROC--

--HOW ABOUT A FEW EXPLANATIONS?

EXPLANATIONS, MON CAPITAINE?

YOU HEARD ME, MISTER!

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF THIS LAYOUT --THESE GOONS--

--WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR, BATROC--AND WHY?

ZE WHY IS SIMPLE, MON CHER--

AS ALWAYS, BATROC IS ZE MER-CENARY--

--AS FOR WHO ZE LEPAIR OBEYS-- THAT I CANNOT SAY--

--FOR, IN TRUTH, I DO NOT KNOW.

NOW-- WHAT I DO? ZAT I CAN SHOW YOU, CHER AMI--

--FOR ALL IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS.

GOOD LORD, MAN--

-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

DONE? IS IT NOT OBVIOUS?

ZE CHILDREN ARE FROM ALL OVAIR NEW YORK-- CHILDREN FROM GHETTOS-- CHILDREN FROM ORPHANAGES--

--ALL OF ZEM ARE BROUGHT TO ME--AND I HOLD ZEM UNTIL ZE MAN WHO PAYS ME TO DO ZIS CHOOSES TO APPEAR!

BATROC, YOU'RE MAD! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS--

--BUT, MON AMI-- YOU WILL HAVE NO CHOICE.

ANDRE-- HIT HEEM!

I TRY MASTER-- BUT HE IS SO STRONG--

--STRONG--AND NO LONGER ALONE!

FALCON!?

YOU EXPECTED THE FANTASTIC FOUR?

I MEAN, LET'S FACE IT, CAP--

--WE'RE FATED TO FIGHT TOGETHER!

I GATHER OUR TWO CASES COINCIDE, FRIEND--BUT WE'LL WORK THAT PART OUT LATER--

--RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE--

I THINK NOT, MON AMI--

FOR IN ZE ULTIMATE BATTLE--

EET IS BATROC WHO MUST WIN!

YOUR SHIELD BLOCKED ZAT BLOW--

--BUT EET CANNOT BLOCK EVERY BLOW, CHER AMI--

--IN ZE END--ONE WILL CONNECT!

YOU SAID IT, BIG MAN--

THUMP!

--ONE WILL!

NICE PLAY, CAP--

--NOW HOW ABOUT HELPING ME?

I'VE GOT SEVEN TO HANDLE--

--WRONG, FALC--YOU'VE GOT SIX!

BOP!

UH-HUH. THAT'S ONE I OWE YOU, CAP!

I'LL COLLECT LATER, FALCON.

RIGHT NOW, I'LL ASK OUR FRIEND ONE MORE TIME: WHO'S YOUR BOSS, LEAPER?

AGAIN, MON AMI: I DO NOT KNOW--

--BUT PERHAPS EET IS TIME WE ALL LEARNED, OUI?

HE MAY YET PULL VICTORY FROM ZISS BLACK DEFEAT--

-- AND BATROC'S HONAIR MAY STILL BE SAVED!

CAP, HE'S GOING FOR SOME SORT OF SWITCH--

--THAT LIGHT-- BURSTING-- BLINDING!

MON DIEU! I SWEAR, I DID NOT KNOW--

--THAT'S OBVIOUS, BATROC--!

--BUT WHO--?

NEXT CALL ME-- --THE STRANGER!

NEXT ISSUE: THE CHILD BUYER!

CAPT. AMERICA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

TRAPPED IN THE BOTTLES OF *DEATH* BY THE NEW, SUPER-POWERFUL STRANGER!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

ONE BURNING INSTANT--AND HE **COMES!** WITH A ROAR LIKE THE RENDING OF TIME AND SPACE--WIND SCREAMING, **CHURNING** IN SUDDEN DISPLACEMENT--THE VERY **AIR** SEEMING TO TWIST AND FOLD IN ON ITSELF--THE **STRANGER** COMES!

THEY TURN AWAY--EACH MUSCLE AND NERVE REACTING IN PRIMITIVE **FEAR**--AND LIKE SOME ARCANE ECHO, HIS LAUGHTER **RINGS** IN THEIR MINDS--AND KNIFES THROUGH THEIR VERY **SOULS!**

MIRROR... MIRROR.....!

IN HEAVEN'S NAME--*WHO--?*

MON AMI--DID YOU NOT *HEAR?*

YOU SHOULD *KNOW,* BATROC--

HE CALLS HIMSELF ZE *STRANGAIR*--AND WELL HE *IS!*

IT'S YOUR FAULT HE'S HERE--**YOUR** FAULT, *MISTER!*

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8747

WHY'D YOU *DO* IT, LEAPER?

KIDNAPPING THOSE *KIDS*-- HOLDING THEM PRISONERS-- FOR *HIM!*

WHY?

I SWEAR EET, CHER AMI--I DID NOT *KNOW!*

L'ARGENT-- ZE *MONEY*--WAS ALL ZAT *CONCERNED* ME--!

THAT'S A LITTLE *OBVIOUS*, BATROC...

...BUT RIGHT NOW, IT COULDN'T MATTER *LESS.*

THIS BRUISER'S HERE TO COLLECT THOSE *CHILDREN*--AND WITH OR *WITHOUT* YOUR PERMISSION, BATROC--

FOR WHAT EET IS *WORTH*, MES CHERS--

--*HE'S GOING TO BE STOPPED!*

--YOU *HAVE* ZAT PERMISSION!

THANKS A *LOT*, BATROC.

LET'S *MOVE*--!

YET, EVEN AS THEY LUNGE FORWARD, EYES RAGING ANGER--

NO, MY FRIENDS --YOU WILL *NOT* MOVE--

--YOU WILL REMAIN *STILL*--

--AND SO YOU WILL *STAY*--

--UNTIL *MY* WORD TELLS OTHERWISE!

*SO LOW ONLY THEIR SHARPEST **NERVES** CAN DETECT IT, THEIR COMES A PARALYZING **WAIL**--AND IN THAT SELF-SAME DIVIDED INSTANT--*

*--THE STRANGER MAKES A GRIM, OFFHAND **GESTURE**-- AND ALL TIME SLOWS-- AND IN THAT MOMENT-- **STOPS**--!*

NOW, MY PUNY FRIENDS...YOUR BEHAVIOR SEEMS MORE **FITTING.**

YOU HAVE BECOME AS MUCH OF AN **ANNOY-ANCE** AS THOSE SILENT CUBS YOU SEEK TO PROTECT--!

YOUR MINDS HAVE BEEN **REMOVED** BUT THE BRIEFEST **SECOND** FROM THIS HARRIED PLANE OF EXISTANCE--AND YOU STAND NOW AS HELPLESS **OBSERVERS**--

--ABLE TO HEAR-- PERHAPS EVEN TO **SEE**--

--BUT TOTALLY **APART** FROM THOSE ENERGIES WHICH FUTILY BOIL **WITHIN** YOU!

PERHAPS NOW YOU MAY FULLY **APPRECIATE** THIS MOMENT...

...YOU MAY EVEN **UNDER-STAND** ITS SIGNIFICANCE...!

WHEN I FIRST APPEARED BEFORE YOU, I NAMED MYSELF THE **STRANGER.** YET NOW THAT PLOY SEEMS **ILL-PLAYED...**

IT APPEARS YOU'VE NEVER **ENCOUNTERED** THAT STAR-STRIDING ALIEN...

...AND SO THIS **REVELATION** DOES NOT CONTAIN THE DEPTH OF **IRONY** IT MIGHT.

AY, IN A WAY, I **AM** THE STRANGER OF WHOM I SPOKE...

...IN THE WAY THAT A **REFLECTION** IS THAT WHICH IT MIRRORS...

...FOR IN TRUTH, I AM FAR **MORE**...

...I AM ALL THAT HE **COULD** BE... AND ALL, **ALL** THAT HE **IS!**

I-- AM-- JAKAR!

SILENTLY THEN, HE TURNS... AT HIS SIDES, HIS FINGERS MOVE IN SOME NERVOUS **GESTURE**, HIS BODY SEEMS TO **TREMBLE** WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE POWER IT CONTAINS...

SLOWLY, HE LOOKS BITTERLY **UPWARD**, AND THERE, IN THE DUST-LADEN AIR OF THE MOLDERING **STUDIO**, A GRIM **IMAGE** BEGINS TO FORM...AND AS IT DOES, HE SAYS, IN A HOLLOW, **HAUNTED** VOICE...

MY FRIENDS... THERE ARE WORLDS... AND WORLDS **BESIDE** WORLDS... OF WHICH YOU MAY NEVER **DREAM.**

"FOR YOU SEE, WE **WERE** ALONE...MORE TOTALLY THAN ANY RACE **BEFORE** US. TWO MILLENIA AGO, SOME COSMIC **CATASTROPHE** HAD CRUSHED OUR GALAXY...DESTROYING ALL STARS, ALL **NEBULI**...

...AND **THIS** DOOMED NIGHTMARE OF A PLANET... IS **MY** WORLD, IN A DIMENSION THAT LIES **PARALLEL** TO YOUR OWN...

...A PLANE OF EXISTANCE SO **DISTANT** YOUR MINDS WOULD CRUMBLE WITH THE EFFORT TO **CONCEIVE** ITS LOCATION!

"...ALL LIFE-BEARING **PLANETS** SAVE OUR OWN UNFORTUNATE WORLD...!'

"FOR TWO HUNDRED AGONIZING CENTURIES, WE STROVE TO DISCOVER IF ANY **OTHER** SENTIENT RACE HAD SOME-HOW SURVIVED...BUT WE STROVE IN **VAIN**...

"...OURS WAS THE **LAST**... NONE BUT **US** HAD WEATHERED THAT GALACTIC PLAGUE...

HERE, MY RACE LIVED IN **PEACE**...PEACE BORN OF BEING COMPLETELY, AND **PERMANENTLY ALONE!**

"...AND IN THE END, AFTER TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF TORTUROUS **SOLITUDE**... EVEN **WE**...SUCCUMBED."

"DESCRIBE THE PLAGUE? EXPLAIN ITS CAUSE, ITS CARRIER? OH, WOULD THAT I COULD, MY FRIENDS...BUT I HAVE NO ANSWER, AND I CAN TELL YOU ONLY THIS...

"FOR REASONS I MAY NEVER UNDERSTAND, I ALONE SURVIVED THAT SINGLE EVE OF UNEARTHLY TERROR... I ALONE AWOKE THE NEXT COLD MORROW, TO FIND MYSELF UPON THE LONELY PEAK WHERE I'D BEEN WORKING...

"...TO FIND THE OTHERS...SILENT.

"THIS I KNOW: THE PLAGUE AFFECTS THE MIND...IT DESTROYS THE VITAL LIFE ESSENSE IN THE BRAIN, SENDING ITS VICTIMS INTO A PARALYTIC COMA...

"ALL OF ITS VICTIMS...

"...EVEN THE LOVELY KARI-LE... MY WIFE.

"IT WAS THEN, AS I CURLED IN SELF-PITY, THAT THE MIRACLE OCCURRED...

"WHETHER MY THOUGHTS ACTIVATED THE WARP-EFFECT, OR WHETHER IT WAS SOME OTHER, MORE PROVIDENTIAL INFLUENCE, I'LL NEVER KNOW...

"...BUT IN THAT INSTANT, THERE APPEARED A RIFT IN THE BARRIER BETWEEN OUR DIMENSIONS...AND I SAW THE MAN FOUR OF YOUR COLLEAGUES CALLED...THE STRANGER*...!

"FOR THE FIRST TIME, I BECAME AWARE OF THE OTHER REALITY-LINES...

*SHOWN IN FF#116. --STAN.

"...AND SUDDENLY, I KNEW WHAT I MUST DO..."

THESE CHILDREN...

THEY WILL PROVIDE MY PEOPLE'S TIMELY SALVATION.

THEIR UNCLUTTERED, INNOCENT SOULS... SHALL FILL THOSE HIDEOUS, EMPTY SHELLS...

...AND ONCE MORE, MY RACE...WILL LIVE.

AY, LOOK WELL, MY UNWITTING MINION...

YOU THOUGHT IT BUT A CLEVER KIDNAPPING, DID YOU NOT?

YOU THOUGHT I'D ASK A RANSOM...SOME GLUTTONOUS EXORBITANT FEE!

YET NOW YOU KNOW...YOU ALL KNOW...IT IS FAR MORE!

COME, MY CHILDREN: YOUR DESTINY AWAITS YOU--

--AS IT MUST EVER AWAIT--US ALL!

ARMS OUTFLUNG, HEAD TOSSED BACK INTO THE FULL WIND OF THE ERUPTING ELECTRON STORM, JAKAR FLICKERS AND GLOWS--UNTIL--

--GONE!

HIS CONTROL'S BROKEN--WE'RE FREE!

BUT--WHAT DO WE DO NOW? HOW CAN WE FIND HIM--OR THE CHILDREN?

CAP, YOU'VE GOT A WAY OF STATING THE PROBLEM--THAT STATES THE PROBLEM!

LET'S FACE IT, MAN--WE'RE HELPLESS!

QU'EST-CE QUI SE PASSE? WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?

I FOR ONE WILL NEVAIR LET ZAT--ZAT THIEF ESCAPE ZA LEAPAIR--!

WRONG, BATROC! YOU WERE THE MAN WHO KIDNAPPED THOSE CHILDREN--

--YOU WERE THE ONE WHO CONTACTED JAKAR--WHO SOLD HIMSELF LIKE SOME CRUMMY JUDAS GOAT!

THERE AREN'T ANY WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOU, LEAPER--

SOK!

--BUT BELIEVE ME--I'D LIKE TO TRY!

VRAIMENT? IS ZAT SO?

EET IS YOU--YOU AND YOUR DARK FRIEND--WHO ARE ZE HEROES, OUI?

NON, JE NE LE SAIS PAS--I DON'T THINK SO, MES CHERS--!

WE EACH DO WHAT WE MUST--AND AT ZIZ MOMENT, YOU MUST FIGHT!

CAP! BATROC'S BRIGADE--WE FORGOT ALL ABOUT THEM--!

ZAT YOU DID, MON CHER FALCON.

AND FOR YOU--ZE BATTAILE IS JUST NOW BEGUN.

AS FOR ZE LEAPAIR--PERHAPS I YET REGAIN MY LOST HONAIR--

--BY TRACING ZIS STRANGAIR--

--AND SAVING ZE YOUNG VICTEEMS, OUI?

COMPRENEZ-VOUS?

AND SO, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN, MES CHERS ENNEMIS--

--I BID YOU--ADIEU!

AMUSEZ-VOUS BIEN!

HE'S GETTING AWAY! FALCON, CALL REDWING--

I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU, MISTER!

THERE GOES BATROC'S SILENT SHADOW NOW!

AND UNLESS I'M LOSING MY INBRED SENSE ABOUT THESE THINGS, CAP--

--FOLLOWING OUR JIVIN' JUMPER *MAY* JUST LEAD US TO THAT *JAKAR* DUDE!

BUT IN THE *MEANTIME*--!

THOK!

--WE'D BETTER MOP UP THE REMAINS OF BATROC'S BRIGADE, *RIGHT,* OLD FRIEND?

GOOD THINKING. WOULDN'T DO TO HAVE THESE CLOWNS ON OUR BACK FOR THE REST OF THE *EVENING*--

WE'VE *ENOUGH* TROUBLE AS IT IS!

SHORT MOMENTS LATER, AS THE TWO COMPANIONS STEP BACK TO CATCH THEIR HAGGARD BREATHS--

MMMM. LOOKS LIKE WE'VE RUN OUT OF *SPARRING PARTNERS,* FALCON.

CAN'T SAY I *MISS* 'EM, CAP.

NOW, ABOUT THIS *BATROC*... MAYBE YOU'D BETTER FILL ME *IN?*

*WHILE CAP TAKES CARE OF HIS **OWN** BIT OF DRAMATIC EXPOSITION, WE'LL RESOLVE **ANOTHER** PORTION OF THIS PLAY BY TURNING TO THE SOMETIMES PROTAGONIST-- KNOWN TO US AS --**THE LEAPER**--!*

*ANY OTHER MAN MIGHT BALK AT SUCH A JUMP-- ANY **OTHER** MAN MIGHT PANIC, OR BE UNABLE TO **REACH** THE FAR CORNER--*

*BUT HE'S **NOT** JUST ANY MAN... FOR YEARS, HE'S **TRAINED,** PUSHING HIMSELF AGAINST ALL MORTAL **WEAKNESS**...DRIVING HIMSELF TO BECOME THE **BEST**...*

*...AND HAVE NO DOUBT... **HE IS** THE **BEST!***

ÇA NE ME PLAÎT PAS...I DO NOT *LIKE* EET. EET IS...TOO *EASY.*

WHY WOULD ZIS *STRANGAIR*...ZIS *ALIEN*... GIVE TO ME ZE HOMING DEVICE, BY WHICH I MAY *TRACE* HEEM?

PERHAPS...AN *OVAIRSIGHT?*

OUI...AN ERROR ON HIS PART, I AM SURE...

...BUT AN ERROR HE WILL SOON MOST DEEPLY REGRET.

I HAVE BUT TO FOLLOW ZE ARROWING LIGHT--

--AND EET WILL LEAD ME TO HIS POINT OF DEPARTURE!

OF ZIS, AT LEAST, I AM CERTAIN--

BUT STILL, EET IS STRANGE--

--FOR I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL THAT SOMEHOW --IN SOME WAY--

--I AM BEING-- WATCHED!

THE MINUTES PASS QUICKLY, AS, HIS EYES STRAINING AGAINST THE DARKNESS--

--THE LEAPER MAKES HIS WAY WEST--

--AND FINDS HIMSELF, EVENTUALLY, OVERLOOKING THE ROCKS ON THE HUDSON SHORE!

ZAT FLICKAIRING GLOW...EET SEEMS I HAVE OBEYED ZE CORRECT INSTINCTS!

ZE STRANGAIR MUST NEED A DEPOT OF SORTS...A PLACE TO BUILD HEEZ POWAIR...!

YET, PEUT-ÊTRE-- HE HAS WAITED TOO LONG.

AND MORE--HE HAS UNDAIR-ESTIMATED ZE LEAPAIR'S SENSE OF HONAIR--

--AND FOR ZAT-- HE WILL DEARLY PAY!

STRAIGHTENING FROM HIS CAUTIOUS CROUCH, BATROC MOVES SILENTLY FORWARD, HIS BROW FURROWING IN THE SUDDEN BRILLIANT GLARE...

...AND SO INTENT IS HE UPON THAT PIERCING GLOW, HE DOESN'T HEAR A DISTANT SCREECH OF WARNING--NOR WOULD HE HEED IT IF HE HAD!

SKREECHHH!

BUT NOW, LET'S PICK UP STILL ANOTHER THREAD OF OUR STORY...

...A THREAD WINDING THROUGH SHIELD'S MIDTOWN HQ, WHERE A CERTAIN SHARON CARTER MOVES THROUGH THE RIGORS OF HER DAY'S GYMNASTICS, UNTIL...

SHARON... COULD I TALK WITH YOU A MOMENT?

WELL. THE CONTESSA VALENTINA ALLEGRO DE FONTAINE.

I REALLY DON'T THINK WE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY TO EACH OTHER, CONTESSA.

SO, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME--

--I THINK I'VE LOST INTEREST IN--

SHARON, PLEASE. I SIMPLY MUST SPEAK WITH YOU.

GIVE ME A MINUTE... JUST ONE MINUTE?

IT'S ABOUT... STEVE.

DON'T TELL ME YOU WANT TO APOLOGIZE? ISN'T THAT JUST A LITTLE MELO-DRAMATIC?

CAN'T WE STOP BICKERING FOR EVEN AN INSTANT?

I'D EXPECT A BIT MORE TASTE THAN THAT, CONTESSA.

I AM SORRY, SHARON ...MORE THAN YOU CAN EVER KNOW.

I MADE A PLAY FOR CAP ONLY BECAUSE I WAS MAD AT NICK FURY.

I THOUGHT...NICK LOVED ME. BUT THEN, ABRUPTLY...HE BEGAN IGNORING ME...PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO LAURA BROWN.*

I SUPPOSE I WANTED TO TEACH HIM A LESSON...

...BUT IT BACKFIRED ...OH, SHARON ...HOW IT BACKFIRED!

SHIELD #12-15. --STURDY STAN

YOU SEE...I DISCOVERED SOMETHING I NEVER KNEW...

A WOMAN CAN LOVE TWO MEN, SHARON...AND HEAVEN HELP ME...

...I LOVE STEVE ROGERS.

VAL, I DIDN'T KNOW...

...I THOUGHT... OH, VAL... WHAT WILL WE DO?

"I DON'T KNOW, SHARON," VAL WHISPERS SOFTLY... "I JUST DON'T KNOW."

REDWING!

BATROC MUST BE IN THAT CAVE, CAP!

WHAT'S THE OLD SAYING....? "WHITHER HE GOEST--?"

YOU GOT ME, FRIEND. NEVER WAS MUCH FOR POETRY.

YOU LEAD, CAP... YOU'RE THE MAN WITH THE SHIELD.

JUST KEEP BEHIND ME, SAM--!

THEIR FOOTSTEPS ECHO SOFTLY IN THE DARKNESS, THEIR BODIES LEANING FORWARD, EYES NARROWING IN THE LIGHT BLOTTING OUT THE SCENE BEFORE THEM...

THEN...THE GLARE DIMS, THEIR VISION ADJUSTS, AND THEY SEE...

BATROC!

OH, THAT'S JUST GREAT. MISTER HERO GOES WANDERING OFF ON HIS OWN-- AND ENDS UP COLDER THAN A WEEK-OLD STIFF.

MAYBE NOT, FALCON... THAT GLOW AROUND HIM...

...MEANS HE'S DEAD. FACE IT, CAP...THAT'S ONE BOY WHO WON'T END UP AT STATE PRISON!

DON'T BE TOO SURE, FRIEND. LOOK AT HIS EYES...THEY'RE WATCHING US. HE SEES US... I'LL BET MY LIFE ON IT.

IT'S YOUR LIFE, CAP. ME, I KINDA ASK--

--WHERE'S THAT STRANGER CHARACTER? WHY AINT HE HERE, PLAYING WATCH-DOG!?

AH--BUT I AM HERE, MY PERCEPTIVE FRIEND--

--AND I AM AFRAID, THAT AT THIS TIME, IN THIS PLACE--

--YOU HAVE LOST YOUR MOST CRUCIAL BATTLE--

--AND I I HAVE WON A WAR--

--A WAR FOR A WORLD!

SOUNDLESSLY, SUDDENLY--THE WORLD SEEMS TO SLAM SHUT--AND TO THE ABRUPTLY ENCAPSULATED CRUSADERS, EVERY OUTSIDE SOUND BECOMES A DISTANT WHISPER--!

CAP--THOSE TUBES, DROPPING DOWN FROM THE CEILING--!

TOO LATE, FALCON--WE STEPPED RIGHT INTO IT--!

WE'RE TRAPPED--!

PRECISELY, EARTHIAN... OR, HOW DO YOU STYLE YOURSELF?

CAPTAIN AMERICA...?

I HAVE YET TO COMPREHEND YOUR WORLD'S FASCINATION FOR THE NATION-STATE...

...A FASCINATION COUPLED WITH A CERTAIN BIZARRE PATRIOTISM...!

WATCH IT, MISTER.

I HARDLY THINK SO, CAPTAIN.

ONCE I BREAK OUT OF THIS GIANT-SIZED TEST TUBE, I'LL--

FOR, AS YOU UNDOUBTEDLY NOW SEE, YOUR EFFORTS ARE USELESS.

AS YOUR COMPATRIOT BEFORE YOU, YOU'LL DISCOVER THE FULL STRENGTH OF THE CRYSTO-FIBRE SUBSTANCE...

...AND PERHAPS THEN YOU'LL ADMIT YOUR TOTAL AND IGNOMINIOUS DEFEAT.

AY. I THINK SO.

BUT ENOUGH OF THIS MEANINGLESS CHATTER.

I HAVE A WORLD TO SAVE...!

WITHIN MOMENTS, A VAST LAVENDAR SCREEN GLOWS INTO LIFE...

...AND SOON, THE INTER-DIMENSIONAL MONITOR SPARKLES WITH ALIEN LIGHT...

THERE...THE HOMEWORLD.

BEFORE THIS EVE IS OUT, ITS LANDS WILL BE FULL WITH LAUGHTER ONCE MORE...

...AND MY FRIENDS, THERE IS NOTHING YOU MAY DO...TO PREVENT IT!

LIGHTNING LICKS GLASS AND STEEL, DANCES PAST RIVET-- DROWNING THE FRIGHTENED CRIES OF THE ASSEMBLED CHILDREN--

"IN MINUTES," SNARLS JAKAR, EYES FLASHING, "THE POWER WILL BUILD TO THE NECESSARY THRESHOLD--

"AND THEN, MY SILENT OBSERVERS--YOUR WORLD WILL BE RID OF BUT A SMALL PORTION OF ITS MORE THAN SURPLUS POPULATION--

"--WHILE MY LAND GAINS ITS MUCH-NEEDED REPLENISHMENT!"

CASTING DESPERATELY ABOUT THE NARROW CONFINES OF HIS GLASSINE PRISON, THE FALCON SEES A MOMENTARY GLOW--!

THAT COUPLING... SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE CONNECTION...

IT'S PARTIALLY SHORT-CIRCUITED. NOT ENOUGH BY ITSELF...

...BUT MAYBE WITH A LITTLE PROPERLY-APPLIED AID...!

THE JOLT COULD BE DANGER-OUS...

...BUT I'VE GOT TO CHANCE IT!

MUST'VE SHORTED WHEN JAKAR TRAPPED US, SO WITH A LITTLE LUCK...!

BRACING HIMSELF AGAINST THE REAR OF THE CAPSULE, HAVING SET HIS FALCON'S CLAW FOR MAXIMUM EXTENSION--

--SAM WILSON RELEASES THE HAIR-TRIGGER CATCH--

--AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!

THAT DID IT!

SPRAAK!

THE COUPLING DETONATED-- TOOK OUT THE WHOLE SIDE OF THE TUBE WITH IT--

GOT TO MOVE-- SLIDE OUTTA HERE BEFORE JAKAR HEARS ME AND--

UH-UNH. BITE YOUR TONGUE, SAMMY-- HE'S TURNING-- RAISING HIS HAND--!

KRAK!

NICE GAMBIT, FALCON. YOU TRICKED HIM INTO SHATTERING MY CAPSULE--!

SO NOW LET'S SEE JUST HOW FAR WE CAN CARRY THE LUCK YOU'VE BOUGHT US, EH, OLD FRIEND?

SOUNDS REAL FINE, CAP--

--JUST LEAVE SOME PIECES FOR ME!

I'VE GOT FIRST CUT, FALCON.

THOSE COMMENTS ON PATRIOTISM WENT DOWN A LITTLE HARSH!

AND PERHAPS YOU'LL SWALLOW THIS MORE READILY, BRASH FOOL?

COME... DID YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE I'D BE UNPROTECTED?

MAYBE *NOT*, JAKAR--

MAYBE WE WERE JUST *TESTING* SOME-THING--

--SOMETHING YOU'VE HELPED US *CONFIRM!*

YOU PRATTLE LIKE CHILDREN.

DO YOU SUPPOSE YOUR *SHIELD* WILL FARE WELL WHERE YOUR HANDS *FAILED?*

UH...NOT *QUITE*, MISTER...

...BUT THEN, NOT *ALL* OF MY GOALS ARE SIMPLY *SHORT TERM!*

MAGNIFIQUE!

THEN WE SHALL BATTLE SIDE BY *SIDE*, MON AMI?

LET'S JUST SAY I NEED YOU AS A *DIVERSION*, LEAPER--

--AS MUCH OF A DIVERSION AS THIS FUTILE *ATTACK*--

--WHILE JAKAR'S FATE CREEPS UP --FROM *BEHIND HIM!*

SORRY, MY DEAR CAPTAIN--

I'VE NO *USE* FOR IDLE AND OBVIOUS *THREATS*--

SHOKK!

--NO USE FOR *ANYTHING* BUT *ACTIONNNNN-HHHHH!*

CAP, THAT'S GOTTA BE THE *GREATEST* DISPLAY OF BILLIARD THEORY I'VE SEEN OUTSIDE'A *HARLEM!*

THANKS FOR THE KIND *WORDS,* FALCON...

...BUT MAYBE WE'D BETTER FOREGO THE *EGO-MASSAGE* TILL LATER, OKAY?

YOU'RE CALLING THE SHOTS FOR *NOW,* MISTER ROGERS--

--AND UNLESS I'M READING YOU *WRONG*--

--THIS ONE CALLS FOR TEAM-WORK!

YOU *COULD* SAY THAT, FALCON... YOU *COULD* SAY THAT!

NOW EET IS *MY* TURN, MES AMIS--

THERE IS A SMALL *SCORE* I HAVE TO SETTLE-- A MATTAIR OF *HONAIR!*

HOLD IT, BATROC... I SAID *HOLD IT!*

YOU DON'T KICK A MAN WHEN HE'S *DOWN,* MISTER-- FIGURITIVELY OR *OTHER-WISE!*

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL *HONOR--!*

EET IS WHAT I CALL *REVENGE,* MON CHER ENNEMI-- REVENGE FOR MAKING A *FOOL* OF ME--

--AND MY FRIEND-- ZIS *REVENGE--* *EET IS MOST SWEET!*

BATROC, NO!

AAAAAA

NO NEED TO BE CONCERNED, DEAR CAPTAIN--

--I AM QUITE PREPARED TO DEFEND MYSELF.

AND NOW, IF WE ARE DONE WITH THESE JUVENILE EXCITATIONS--?

I HAVE WORK TO DO--BEFORE I MAY TRANSPORT THOSE CHILDREN HOME.

DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH, BUSTER.

REDWING!

FROM THE SHADOWS ABOVE, A FLUTING SHRIEK--THE BEATING OF WINE-DARK WINGS--

THAT ACCURSED FOWL--

MOVING--DARTING AGAINST MY FACE! YOU MIND-LESS DOLTS --WHAT MOMENTARY DIFFERENCE CAN HE MAKE --?

YET, EVEN AS JAKAR'S STEEL-BANDED WRIST SWEEPS THE BIRD BACK, ALERT EYES TURN TO THE GLOWING MONITOR SCREEN--

THE WOMAN CALLED KARI-LE... SOMEHOW THE SCANNER'S LOCKED ON HER....!

MAYBE IT'S JUST A STROKE OF LUCK... OR SOME COSMIC PROVIDENCE...

...BUT THAT LADY'S JUST WHAT WE NEED!

EYES BURNING A FERAL SCARLET, JAKAR WHIRLS--AND HIS VOICE ECHOES WITH A SUDDEN BITTER CHILL--

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

GET BACK FROM THAT BOARD!

WHY, JAKAR... AFRAID OF WHAT WE'LL SEE?

OR ARE YOU AFRAID OF WHAT YOU'LL SEE...

...AFRAID THAT YOUR WIFE'S EYES AREN'T BLIND?

AFRAID THAT SHE'LL SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING--AND CONDEMN YOU?

WHICH IS IT, JAKAR? OR MISTER--DON'T YOU KNOW?

YOU MIGHT AS WELL **FACE** IT, FRIEND. IF YOU SUCCEED...AND SHE **DISCOVERS** WHAT YOU'VE **DONE**...

SHE'LL WISH YOU'D LET HER **STAY** IN HER COMA...

...AND MAYBE... SHE'LL **HATE** YOU. DO YOU **WANT** THAT, JAKAR? **DO YOU?**

KARI-LE...

...MY BELOVED... KARI-LE.

THEN, HIS VOICE **CRACKS**...AND TREMBLING FROM SOME **INNER** TURMOIL, THE MAN KNOWN AS JAKAR SINKS TO WEARY **KNEES**, SHOULDERS BENDING, HUNCHING...

EASY. JUST ANOTHER **MOMENT**...

...ANOTHER MOMENT, AND IT'S **OVER.**

YES, MORTAL... YES, IT'S **OVER.**

THE DREAM... THE FAINT LIGHT OF **HOPE**... IS GONE.

YOU HAVE **WON**, MY FRIEND...!

YOU FORCE ME TO REALIZE... WHAT I **WOULD NOT** REALIZE BEFORE!

I **CANNOT** BRING HER BACK...CANNOT BRING **ANY** OF THEM BACK.

THEY ONLY EXIST... IN MY **MEMORY.**

...AND SO... THIS GAME IS **ENDED.**

THE PAWNS ARE FREED... FOR THE KNIGHTS HAVE WON O'ER **ALL!**

HIS HAND SWINGS --POWER BURSTS AND **GLOWS**--

THE GLASSINE PRISONS SEEM TO **DISSOLVE**--

AND, IN THAT INSTANT, THEIR VICTIMS-- **STAND FREE.**

AS FOR **JAKAR**...

...**HIS** END TOO HAS COME.

MY TIME ON THE PLANET EARTH IS **OVER**...

...AND I HAVE BUT **ONE** RECOURSE.

C'EST DOMMAGE-- A PITY YOU *THINK* SO, MON AMI--

FOR YOU *STILL* HAVE ZE SCORE OF *HONAIR* TO SETTLE WITH *BATROC!*

THEN CONSIDER IT ***SETTLED,*** *EARTHIAN FOOL!*

I'VE NO MORE ***PATIENCE*** *FOR YOUR PETTY MERCENARY GOALS.*

NO... FOR ***ME,*** *SOME* ***GREATER*** *FATE REMAINS.*

OF THIS AT ***LEAST,*** *I AM* ***SURE.***

I SEE NOW... NOT FOR ***NAUGHT*** *WAS THIS MIND AND SOUL* ***RETAINED...!***

PERHAPS DESTINY ***MEANT*** *IT TO BE THIS WAY FOR REASONS AND DESIGNS I MAY* ***NEVER*** *COMPREHEND.*

BUT THIS I ***KNOW:*** *FROM THIS MOMENT* ***ON,*** *I AM A GOD WITHOUT A LAND TO RULE--*

--AND, BORNE ON SILVER WINGS OF STARLIGHT... IS GONE.

--AND SO, MUST ***WANDER*** *THE DEPTHS OF SPACE--AND* ***SPREAD*** *--WHAT I HAVE* ***LEARNED!***

AND NOW THE CRIMSON EYES TURN ***SKYWARD*** *--THE BODY ARCS, THE FORM* ***FLICKERS--***

BUT BEFORE THE LEAPER CAN COMPLETE HIS FURTIVE MOVEMENT TO THE ***REAR...***

HOLD *IT, MISTER!*

YOU'RE NOT GOING ***ANYWHERE*** JUST YET.

YOU GOT HIM, CAP!

AND OLD BUDDY --THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO ***KEEP*** HIM.

HEAR ME, LEAPER? THIS TIME--YOU STAY ***PUT.***

ZE TEST OF HONAIR HAS BEEN ***TRIED.***

AND SO... I MUST SETTLE FOR ZE ***EXPEDIENCY...*** *AND MAKE MY ESCAPE... **NOW.***

WHOK!

UNNNH! MES AMIS, I AM AT YOUR ***SERVICE.***

SOON...

LISTEN TO THEM, BATROC.

YOU WERE ALMOST RESPONSIBLE FOR STILLING THOSE VOICES *FOREVER.*

OUI ...BUT I *DID* HELP TO SAVE ZEM, NON, CHER AMI?

DON'T TWIST YOUR ARM PATTING YOUR *BACK,* LEAPER.

YOU GO ON *HOME,* CAP! I'LL MAKE SURE BATROC *STICKS* TO MEET THE COPS.

AS YOU *WILL...* CELA NE FAIT RIEN.

IN DAYS... PERHAPS *HOURS...* I WILL BE *FREE* AGAIN.

MAYBE *SO,* BATROC.

BUT I WONDER-- WILL YOU *EVER* BE FREE--OF YOUR *MEMORY?*

WEARILY, HE TURNS AWAY...AND BEHIND HIS FRIEND WATCHES: CONCERNED...AND MORE THAN A LITTLE CONFUSED...!

HOURS PASS LIKE WINDING THOUGHTS...AND WHEN, IN THEIR TIME, THEY LEAD HIM TO HIS HOTEL...

...THEY ABANDON HIM WITHOUT ANSWERS...ONLY MORE QUESTIONS.

WHY'D NICK *FLARE UP* AT ME LIKE THAT-- THROWING ME OUT OF *SHIELD HQ*--ORDERING ALL AGENTS NOT TO *HELP* ME--EVEN *SEE* ME?

WHY...? *WHY?*

SOMETHING TO DO WITH *SHARON...*OR MAYBE *VAL?*

THE WAY VAL'S BEEN *ACTING* LATELY... COULD *THAT* HAVE INFLUENCED FURY?

KNOCK! KNOCK!

SOMEONE AT THE *DOOR...!*

SHARON!

I'VE GOT TO *TALK* TO YOU... *TELL* YOU...!

STEVE... MAY I COME IN?

TELL ME *WHAT,* HONEY?

WHAT'S *WRONG--?* HAS NICK--

NOTHING LIKE *THAT,* STEVE. IT'S *VAL...*

...OH, *STEVE...!*

AND AFTER SHARON FINISHES HER EXPLANATION, COLLAPSING INTO STEVE ROGERS' ENFOLDING ARMS...

IT'S QUITE A *CREW* WE'VE GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH, ISN'T IT, SHARON?

STEVE... WHAT CAN WE *DO?* I FEEL SO *SORRY* FOR HER...!

I DON'T KNOW, SHARON. IT'S SOMETHING THE CONTESSA WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT FOR *HERSELF.*

AS FOR ME... I *KNOW* WHAT *I* WANT TO DO.

...SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TRY FOR QUITE A *WHILE.*

STEVE... HOLD ME...

...DON'T LET ME GET AWAY FROM YOU... NEVER LET ME GET *AWAY.*

QUIET, SHARON.

...DON'T SAY... ANOTHER WORD.

TOUCHING, ISN'T IT, MY FRIEND?

...YEH, *REAL* TOUCHING.

A REGULAR *"LOVE STORY"* ...FOR A PAIR OF FOOLS...

ABOUT TO DIE!

NEXT ISSUE:

NIGHTMARE!

CAPT. AMERICA

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON™

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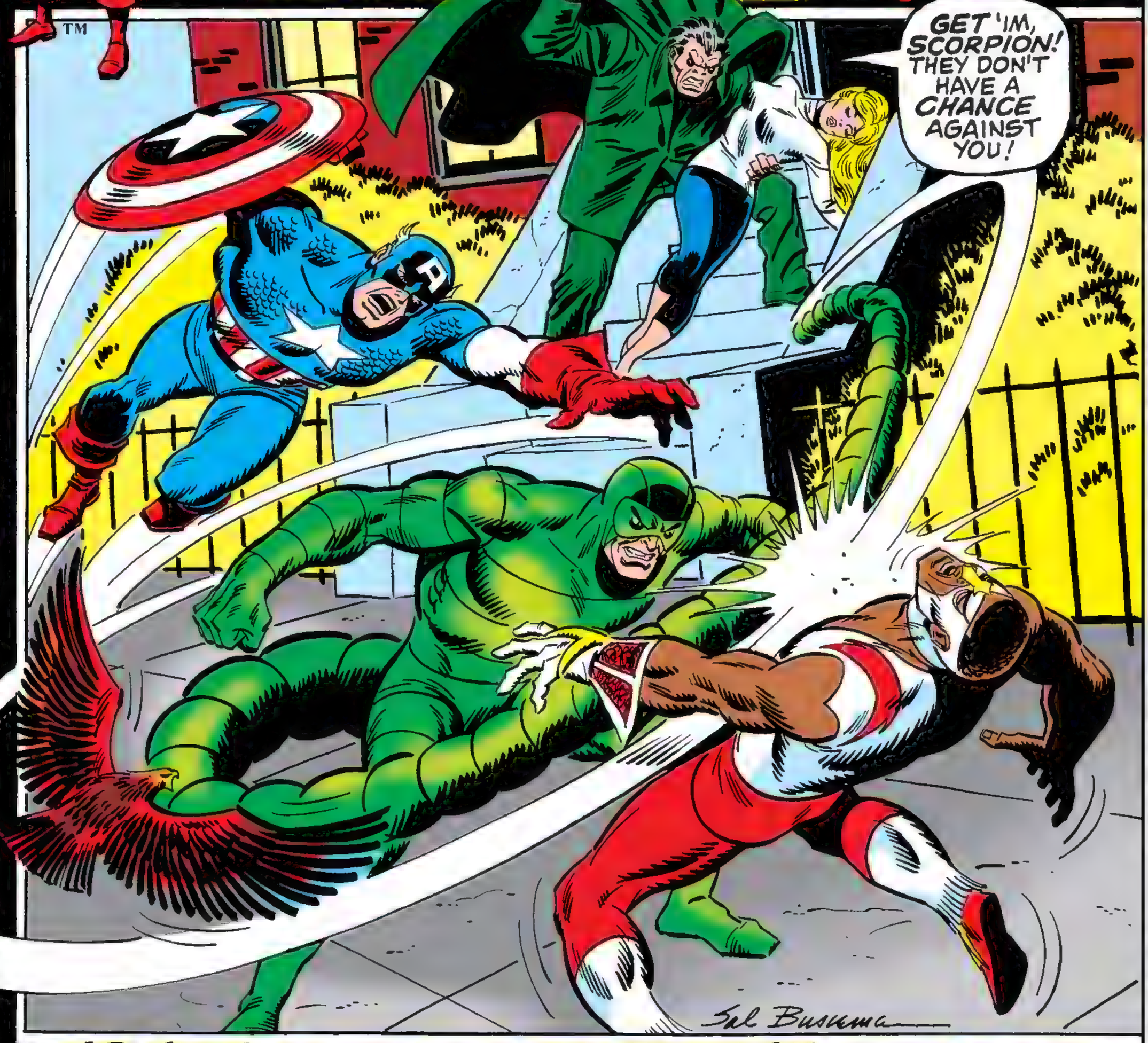

MR. HYDE STRIKES AGAIN! THE SCORPION HANGS LOOSE!

PANIC ON PARK AVENUE!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

PANIC ON PARK AVENUE

STAN LEE
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SO YOUR NAME'S ***CAPTAIN AMERICA***... SO WHAT DOES IT ***GET*** YOU, MISTER, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

...IT GETS YOU A FRIEND NAMED ***NICK FURY***...WHO TELLS YOU WHAT A ***CRUMB*** YOU ARE FOR NOT JOINING THE GROUP CALLED ***SHIELD***...

...IT GETS YOU A LOTTA ***BRUISES***... MAYBE A COUPLE'A ***BROKEN BONES***...

...IT GETS YOU ***NOTHING,*** MISTER ROGERS... NOTHING BUT DAYS OF ***PAIN!***

897Z

BUT, FOR STEVE ROGERS, THOSE DAYS OF PAIN SEEM DESTINED TO END MOST ABRUPTLY... AS WITHIN THE DEEPENING SHADOWS OF AN ALLEY FRONTING DIM-LIT EAST FOURTEENTH STREET, ONE FIGURE SHIFTS ITS MASSIVE TAIL...

...WHILE ANOTHER ON THE CURB TURNS HIS GRIM FEATURES AWAY...

...YET, BOTH MOTIONS PASS UNNOTICED BY THE THOUGHTFUL MISTER ROGERS...HIS MIND IS ELSEWHERE, CENTERED ON THE SOFT EYES, THE GENTLE SMILE OF THE GIRL CALLED SHARON CARTER...

...THE GIRL HE LOVES, BUT IS FORBIDDEN TO SEE...

...AND SO, HE DOESN'T HEAR THE HISSED COMMAND A FEW FEET BEHIND HIM...

HE DOESN'T SEE THE SUDDEN TWISTING MOTION...

NO, HE DOESN'T REALIZE HIS DANGER UNTIL--

TOO LATE, BUSTER--

--WE'VE GOT YOU WHERE WE WANT YOU NOW--

SHUT UP, SCORPION. WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR MUTTER-INGS--

--AND IF PRETTY-BOY HERE'S GOT ANY BRAINS --HE WON'T TRY ANY CRIES OF HIS OWN!

RIGHT, PRETTY BOY?

--AND YOU'RE GONNA TELL US WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW!

WRONG, FELLA--

--SILENT SURRENDER JUST ISN'T MY *STYLE!*

URRMPH!

AND WHAT *IS* YOUR STYLE, BUDDY? JUST 'CAUSE YOU GOT THE TOP HAND ON *MISTER HYDE*--

--DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN ESCAPE-- *THE SCORPION'S TAIL!*

SMAK

MAYBE NOT *ESCAPE* IT, BRIGHT EYES-- BUT DOES *DUCKING* COUNT?

AND FOR THAT MATTER--HOW ABOUT A LITTLE UNEXPECTED *UPPERCUT?*

HOPE I'M NOT BREAKING THE RULES--BY FIGHTING *BACK,* I MEAN.

WOULDN'T WANT TO MAKE THINGS *TOO* EASY ON YOU CLOWNS-- *WOULD* WE?

BOK!

BUT THEN--

I'VE ONLY *STUNNED* THEM...AND I DON'T *DARE* LET LOOSE...

WHOEVER THEY ARE, THEY DON'T KNOW I'M *CAPTAIN AMERICA...*

..AND FOR THE TIME BEING, MAYBE THAT'S *ONE* SECRET I OUGHT TO KEEP!

"WHOEVER THEY ARE"? WELL, RATHER THAN EXAMINE THAT STATEMENT, LET'S LOOK IN FOR A BRIEF MOMENT ON THE TWO CHARACTERS IN QUESTION...

...FOR THEIR NEXT COMMENTS WILL PROVE MOST REVEALING!

BLAST --DIDN'T THINK HE COULD *HIT* SO HARD--

YOU DIDN'T THINK AT *ALL,* SCORPION--

AND SINCE *YOUR* PLAN TO GET BACK AT *SHIELD* FAILED--

--PERHAPS IT'S TIME FOR *MISTER HYDE* TO CALL THE SHOTS--!

THAT GIRL WE SAW ROGERS WITH ...THE *SHIELD* AGENT, SHARON CARTER...

NEXT, WE GO AFTER *HER,* MY FRIEND...

...YES... *AFTER HER!*

MYSTERIES ENOUGH FOR YA?

IF WE'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION, THEN HOW ABOUT LETTING US SHIFT IT A MOMENT--TO A STREET OF BATTERED BROWNSTONE TENEMENTS A HUNDRED BLOCKS NORTH ON THE ISLE OF MANHATTAN...

HEY, MAN--IT'S THAT FALCON CAT!

LOOKIT THE WAY THAT BIRD SWINGS--

COOL IT, JUAN. THAT'S NOT WHERE YOUR HEAD SHOULD BE--!

THEY GROW SILENT, AND THEIR EYES TURN AWAY...AND SOMETHING TWISTS IN THE FALCON'S CHEST...

FORCING A SMILE, HE MOVES CLOSER...

SO WHAT'S HAPPENING, JUAN?

YOUR MOTHER FEELING BETTER AFTER ALL THAT KIDNAPPING BUNK?*

YEAH, A LITTLE I GUESS.

HEY--CAN I--YOUR FALCON, CAN I HOLD IT?

*CAP #149. --S.

CUT IT, JUAN.

YOU'RE FORGETTING WHAT THIS CAT IS, BROTHER.

I--I'M SORRY, BROTHER MICHEL.

MAYBE YOU'D CARE TO FILL ME IN, "BROTHER".

JUST WHAT IS THIS DUDE?

GLAD YOU ASKED, BOY--

--'CAUSE IT'S ABOUT TIME SOMEBODY TOLD YOU.

YOU'RE A SELLOUT, MISTER--

--YOU'RE ONE OF WHITEY'S JIVE-MOUTH UNCLE TOM'S!

FRIEND, YOU'D BETTER BE THANKFUL THAT ISN'T *TRUE*--

--'CAUSE IF IT *WAS*--

--YOU'D BE PLASTERED ALL OVER THE *CURB.*

YOU TALK A NICE *LINE,* FALCON.

TOO BAD THE ACTION'S NOT UP TO THE *WORD.*

ANYTHING YOU *WANT,* MISS?

LET'S NOT BE SO *FORMAL,* MISTER FALCON.

YOU CAN CALL ME *LEILA...* PLENTY DO.

JUST DON'T DO IT TOO *OFTEN,* MISTER FALCON, OR I MIGHT GET THE WRONG *IDEA...*

...AND I'D HATE TO SAY YELLOW-BACKS JUST AIN'T MY *TYPE.*

NICE OF YOU TO *MENTION* IT!

FOR A MINUTE THERE, FOR JUST *ONE* MINUTE...

...I THOUGHT THE PROBLEM WAS MAYBE *ME!*

THANKS FOR SET-TING ME *STRAIGHT.*

THERE'S *BITTER-NESS* IN HIS TONE... AND PERHAPS HE'S *RIGHT* TO BE BITTER, THIS FALCON, THIS MAN NAMED *SAM WILSON...*

HE'S TRIED TO DO WHAT HE CONSIDERS RIGHT...

...AND YET, THERE ARE TOO MANY OPINIONS... TOO MANY EXTREMES...

...AND HE KNOWS, PAINFULLY, THAT TO ONE OF THEM AT LEAST, HE'LL ALWAYS BE WRONG; TO ONE SIDE, HE'LL HAVE ALWAYS SOLD OUT...

...BUT TO HIM-SELF? WHAT ABOUT... HIMSELF?

...FALCON?

...IF YOU'VE GOT A *MOMENT*, FRIEND...

...I *NEED* A FRIEND.

YOU'VE *GOT* HIM, MAN.

WHAT'S THE *BUZZ?*

IF YOU MEAN--WHAT'S *WRONG*--

--WELL, OLE BUDDY, EITHER YOUR PAL ROGERS IS GOING OUT OF HIS *MIND*--

--OR I'VE JUST BEEN ATTACKED BY A PAIR OF *DEAD MEN!*

EYEBROWS RAISED, SAM WILSON LEADS THE STUNNED, STRANGELY SILENT CAPTAIN AMERICA TO THE SPARTAN APARTMENTS IN THE TENEMENT BELOW... AND THERE, AMID THE SOUNDS OF THE SLUM SURROUNDING THEM, THEY BEGIN TO TALK...

NOW GIVE IT TO ME *AGAIN*, STEVE.

SOMETHING ABOUT *GHOSTS...?*

NOT *QUITE*, SAM...

THEY'RE *REAL* ENOUGH, ALL RIGHT... BUT THE *THING* IS...

...BOTH THE SCORPION AND MISTER HYDE HAVE BEEN REPORTED *DEAD!*

IT HAPPENED *MONTHS* AGO--*

--DURING A BATTLE WITH THE GUY CALLED *DAREDEVIL* ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER....!

APPARENTLY, THE SCORPION TOOK A FLYING *LEAP*-- THE BLACK WIDOW TRIED TO *SAVE* HIM--

EEEEEEEEEYAHA

--AND IT ALL *ENDED* ON THE STREET TWO HUNDRED FLOORS *BELOW!*

BTHOM

CRAK!

"--TAKING THE SCORPION'S REMAINS WITH HIM!"

I'VE GOT ORDERS TO *STOP* YOU FROM EXAMINING THE *SCORPION*--

--SO THAT'S WHAT I'M GONNA *DO*--

--ANYWAY I *CAN!*

*"SHORTLY AFTER, WHILE THE WIDOW STOOD *TRIAL* FOR THE SCORPION'S DEATH, MISTER HYDE APPEARED AT THE *CITY MORGUE*--*

*"HE AND DD BATTLED-- AND THEN, FOR REASONS OLD HORN-HEAD COULDN'T *UNDERSTAND*, HYDE BLEW UP BOTH HIMSELF AND THE MORGUE--*

*IT HAPPENED IN ISSUES #82 & 83 OF DD'S MAG, NATCH. --S.

HE PAUSES, SIPS AT THE BLACK COFFEE STEAMING IN THE CHEAP PLASTIC CUP AND SETS IT GENTLY DOWN...

WELL...THAT'S THE *STORY*, SAM.

YOU MAKE SOME-THING OUT OF IT...

"...'CAUSE, BROTHER, I'LL BE BLASTED IF I CAN!"

PERHAPS SO, STEVE ROGERS...BUT IF YOU COULD SEE BENEATH A CERTAIN EAST SIDE **STREET**, NOT A **FEW** OF YOUR QUESTIONS WOULD BE ANSWERED...

--DON'T BE A *FOOL*, HYDE.

WHO *ELSE* COULD HAVE DONE WHAT WAS DONE TO US--?

REMEMBER WHAT I *TOLD* YOU--?

HAVEN'T I TOLD YOU OFTEN ENOUGH--? IT'S *SHIELD* WE SHOULD BE AFTER-- *SHIELD!*

"--FIVE MONTHS AGO I SAT IN JAIL, BABY-- AND BELIEVE ME, I WAS *BURNING*--

--GONNA GET *OUT*, HEAR ME--?

YOU AINT GONNA KEEP ME *IN*, BUSTER--*NO WAY!*

O.T.

"THAT'S WHEN IT STARTED; THEY'D BEEN KEEPING ME DRUGGED, SO I COULDN'T USE MY *TAIL*--

WHIRRRR RRRRRRRRR

"AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS A DREAM-- THERE WAS THIS SOUND, A DULL WHIRRING, SO FAR-AWAY LIKE--"

"--AND THEN--THE THING *APPEARED!*"

SOME SORTA *GLOBE*...AN' IT'S *GLOWING*, PULSING OFF AN' ON...

WHAT *IS* THIS, SOME KINDA CRUMMY *TRICK*...TO GET ME SCARED, IS *THAT* IT....?

"ONLY IT *WASN'T* A GAG...I FELT THE THING START TO *HEAT UP*, WAVES OF CRAZY GOLDEN *LIGHT* WASHING OVER ME...

"...IT...IT BEGAN TO *HURT*, AND I TRIED TO *SCREAM*...

"...BUT, HYDE, I OPENED MY MOUTH--AND NUTHIN' CAME OUT--*NUTHIN'!*"

"I'M NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT-- I GUESSED I BLACKED OUT--

"ALL I REALLY KNOW IS, THAT BALL DID SOME-THIN TO ME--

"--IT MADE ME GONE--

"--AND MISTER, IT KEPT ME THERE FOR A PRETTY BLAMED LONG TIME!"

"IT MUST'A BEEN MONTHS BEFORE I WOKE UP, FEELING A COOL MOIST BREEZE LICKING MY FOREHEAD, OPENING MY EYES AND SEEING A BLUISH GAS LEAKING THROUGH A TINY CRACK...

"IT TOOK ME A MINUTE TO FIGURE OUT I WAS IN SOME SORT OF GLASS CASE--

"--BUT ONCE I GOT THE IDEA-- I GOT OUT!

SMASH

NOBODY HOLDS THE SCORPION PRISONER, Y'HEAR ME--?

NOBODY!

"AND THAT'S WHEN I FIRST SAW **YOU**--

"WE WERE IN A CAVERN, ALL DANK WALLS AND STONE FLOORING, WITH EQUIPMENT LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A **KARLOFF** FLICK--

"AND OVER AGAINST THE OTHER WALL, THERE WAS ANOTHER CASE--

"STILL NOT **THINKING** TOO CLEARLY, I ANKLED OVER, LISTENING FOR SOME SOUND THAT MAYBE I'D BEEN **HEARD**...BUT IT WAS QUIET, REAL QUIET, LIKE A **TOMB**...

"...AND SEEING **YOU** WAS JUST WHAT I DIDN'T **NEED!**

"I PUT IT ALL **TOGETHER,** THEN-- I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THOUGH I STILL WASN'T QUITE SURE **WHY**--

"--I GUESS I THOUGHT **YOU** MIGHT KNOW, HYDE--AND THAT'S WHY I SET YOU **FREE**--

"YOU AWOKE MORE **SLOWLY**... MAYBE YOU'D BEEN UNDER THE GAS **LONGER** THAN I HAD; I DON'T KNOW...I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, JUST **WAITED** FOR **YOU** TO...

"AND MISTER, WHEN YOU DID-- YOU SAID IT **ALL**--

YOU--WHAT'D YOU **DO** TO ME--

--WHAT'D **YOU DO?**

HEY, **WAITA-SECOND,** BUSTER--

"BUT YOU **WOULDN'T** LET ME GET IT OUT--YOU SNARLED AND GRABBED MY THROAT IN A VICE-LIKE **GRIP**--

:UAARRKK:

HYDE WAITS FOR **NO ONE,** LITTLE MAN--

--YOU'D BETTER **EXPLAIN-- NOW!**

"I GULPED IT OUT BETWEEN WHEEZING BREATHS, AND WHEN I WAS **DONE**--

SO YOU FIGURE IT'S A **PRISON**, HUH?

OKAY, PAL-- I'LL BUY THAT-- FOR **NOW**.

IN THE MEAN-TIME--LET'S FIND A WAY **OUT** OF THIS PLACE--!

"THERE WERE **STEPS**, WE FOLLOWED THEM UP...

"...AND OUT, INTO A DESERTED **MANSION**...THE PLACE WAS DARK, EMPTY; IN ONE ROOM, WE FOUND SOME SORT OF **MONITOR** SCREEN...

"...BUT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO STICK AROUND TO FIND OUT WHO WAS **BEHIND** THE WHOLE STINKIN' DEAL...

"INSTEAD, WE HURRIED **OUTSIDE**...

"IT WAS NIGHT, A COLD **WINTER** NIGHT...IT'D BEEN **SUMMER** THE LAST I KNEW; I GOT **PANICKY** FOR A MINUTE...

STOP **WHINING**, FOOL--

THERE'S SOMEONE COMING-- A **CAR**!

OUT, MY FRIEND--

--OR WOULD YOU RATHER **ARGUE**-- WITH **MISTER HYDE**?

"HE WHIMPERED SOMETHING ABOUT IT BEING A NEW CAR--NO **INSURANCE**--BUT WHAT COULD THAT MATTER TO **US**?

"WE LIT FROM THERE LIKE A PAIR'A BATS OUTTA **HELL**--AND IT WAS THEN I GOT TO THINKING, AND REALIZED WHO WAS **BEHIND** IT ALL--

--SHIELD? YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND, SCORPION.

WHAT COULD THEY GAIN BY ALL THAT TROUBLE--?

THINK, HYDE --THINK. MAYBE WE WERE ONLY THE FIRST--

YEAH--THE GUINEA PIGS FOR A NEW TYPE'A JAIL!

FOR A MOMENT, HYDE'S BROW CRINKLES IN THOUGHT, AND THEN--

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, SCORPION. NOBODY ELSE HAS GOT THAT KIND OF EQUIP-MENT--!

YEH...YEH, IT'S GOTTA BE THEM. AND ONE WAY TO GET TO THEM--

NOW YOU'RE THINK-ING, HYDE.

NOW YOU'RE THINKING!

THINKING, YES--BUT LABORING UNDER SEVERAL GRIM DELUSIONS, AS FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF DAREDEVIL ARE ALL TOO AWARE--

FOR, THERE WAS ONE OTHER WHO POSSESSED EQUIPMENT ON A PAR--AND VASTLY SUPERIOR--TO THAT OF SHIELD--

--THE ANDROID-CREATURE FROM THIRTY CENTURIES IN THE FUTURE--THE "MAN" NAMED MISTER KLINE!*

*IT WAS KLINE, OTHER-WISE KNOWN AS THE ASSASSIN, WHO CREATED THE ANDROID DUPLICATES OF HYDE AND THE SCORPION--AND WHOSE WAR AGAINST OUR WORLD HAS BEEN DULY CHRONICLED IN DD NOS. 77-84, AND IRON MAN NOS. 41-45. --SCRUPULOUS STAN.

AND NOW THAT THOSE MONTHS-OLD LOOSE ENDS HAVE BEEN AT LONG-LAST TIED--

LET'S TURN OUR PASSING ATTENTION ELSE-WHERE, TO TWO RUNNING FIGURES RACING SOUTH ALONG THE SOOT-LADEN MANHATTAN ROOFTOPS--

--BUT ARE YOU *SURE*, CAP.?

HOW SURE DO I *HAVE* TO BE, SAM.?

SHARON SAID SHE'D BEEN *FOLLOWED* EARLIER THIS EVENING*--

*ACTUALLY LAST ISSUE. --S.

--AND THOSE DUPLICATES-- OR *WHATEVER*-- SAID SOMETHING ABOUT GOING *AFTER* HER.

I MAY HAVE MADE A *MISTAKE*-- I WAS TOO FAR AWAY TO BE *SURE*--

--BUT BETTER TO BE *OVER*-PROTECTIVE --AND WRONG--

--THAN TO HAVE SHARON GET *HURT!*

QUIETLY, THE FALCON AGREES-- AND THEY SWING OUT OF THE TWILIGHT DARK-NESS, TOWARDS THE GOLD-LIT FRONT ENTRANCE OF A CERTAIN PARK AVENUE TOWNHOUSE--

--A TOWNHOUSE DORM KEPT BY SHIELD FOR ITS UNATTACHED FEMALE AGENTS!

WAIT HERE, SAM. I'LL GET SHARON AND BE *BACK* IN A MOMENT!

DO IT, CAP.

BUT, AS CAP ENTERS THE GLEAMING LOBBY...

SNAP!

THAT ELECTRIC *EYE*--

IT'S GLOWING --SHUTTING THE DOORS-- *LOCKING* THEM!

BLAST IT-- I'D *FORGOTTEN!*

NICK FURY'S ORDERED ME TO KEEP AWAY FROM ALL *SHIELD OFFICES*--

--INCLUD-ING THE PRIVATE DORMS!

I'VE BEEN *LOCKED OUT!* THE STUPID *FOOL!*

EVEN AS IT BEGINS, CAP'S SNARL OF *FRUSTRATION* BREAKS OFF--AND HE WHIRLS AT A CRY FROM THE STREET *OUTSIDE*--

HEY, HERO-- *HELP!*

THE SCORPION AND MISTER HYDE!

YEAH, WELL-- I'D KINDA ALREADY *GUESSED* THAT, CAP--

--SO HOW-- ABOUT GIVIN' YOUR OLE BUDDY A *HAND*, HEY, BRIGHT-EYES?

YOU WON'T BE *NEEDING* IT, BUSTER--

SWISH!

--NOT AFTER *I* GET THROUGH WITH YA!

YOU *TALK* A GOOD FIGHT, PAL--

--AND: *UNNH*: --LOOKS LIKE YOU *FIGHT* A GOOD ONE, TOO!

THAT--THAT TAIL--PINNING ME AGAINST THE *LAMP-POST*--!

THAT'S PRETTY *SMART* OF YOU, BOY--

--THE WAY YOU FIGURED THAT OUT--ALL BY *YOURSELF!*

THEY TEACH YOU THAT IN *SPY* SCHOOL, BUD--?

MAYBE THEY TAUGHT YOU ABOUT *THIS* AT THE SAME TIME, HUH?

SKRUTCH!

--IT'S CALLED GETTIN' *KILLED*--

--FOR STICKING YOUR NOSE *WHERE IT DON'T BELONG!*

YET OURS ARE NOT THE ONLY EYES TO WATCH THIS SCENE--

--TWO STORIES ABOVE, A CURTAIN DRAWS BACK--

--AND A BLOND-TRESSED GIRL STARES IN STARK HORROR AS SHE SEES THE FALCON TWIST, FALLING--

CLAMP!

--SEES HIS HAND ARC OUT, SEES THE SUDDEN GLINT OF METAL ON STONE--

--AND AS HE PULLS FREE OF THE DEADLY WEIGHT, SHE FEELS HER BREATH RELEASED--!

AT THE WINDOW, SHE TURNS--BUT THIS TIME, ONLY OUR EYES WERE PRIVY TO HER MOVEMENTS--

SCREECH!

--FOR, ON THE STREET BELOW, THE OTHERS ARE UNAWARE THAT THEY'VE BEEN SEEN--

SOME OF THEM HAVE THEIR MINDS ON OTHER THINGS--ON THE SCREECH OF A SUDDENLY SWERVING TRUCK, FOR ONE--

--ON THE DIVING EFFORT TO ESCAPE THAT TRUCK, FOR ANOTHER--

HONK!

HONK

--AND ON THE CAPTURE OF A CERTAIN VIOLENT MISTER HYDE, FOR A THIRD--!

BRAK

THRUMP!

IF ANYBODY *ASKS* YOU, MISTER--

THAT WAS TO SETTLE A *PRIVATE* SCORE!

YOU *FRIGHTEN* ME, WINGHEAD--

--AND MAYBE *THEN* I'LL TRY'N FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU *MEANT* BY THAT CRACK.

RIGHT NOW I GUESS WE'VE BEEN PRETTY WELL *INTRODUCED!*

NOT THAT I THINK IT'S *NECESSARY*-- I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA--HOW YOU WORK WITH *SHIELD*--

MAYBE *LATER* I'LL GET SCARED, ALL SWEATY AND *TREMBLIN'*--

--AND MISTER, THAT'S ALL I NEED TO *KNOW!*

--BUT THEN, I'M NOT EXACTLY A NICK FURY *FAN*--

SO OBVIOUSLY THE BOBBSEY TWINS HATE *SHIELD* FOR SOME REASON--

SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD TO *ME*--

SO I'LL HAVE TO *TEMPER* MY JUDGE-MENT JUST A *LITTLE*--

--AND NOT END UP FIGHTING ON *THEIR SIDE!*

WHAT'S *HAPPENIN'*, CHESTER?

CRAACK!

NO MORE... DON'T *HIT* ME... ANYMORE.

I'VE HAD IT... IT'S HYDE'S FIGHT, NOT *MINE!*

:UNNGHH:- SOMETHING-- SNAPPIN' IN MY *CHEST--!*

I KNOW I'M GOING TO *REGRET* THIS--

ROLL *OVER*, SCORPION. I'LL--

--YOU'LL DO *NUTHIN'*, BUDDY BOY--

--AND THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU'RE A *FOOL!*

:ARRRNHGHH!:

SOMEDAY YOU GUYS ARE GONNA *LEARN*, Y'KNOW?

NOW TELL ME ABOUT *SHIELD*, MISTER--AND TELL ME *FAST.*

KAAAAKAA

BUT THE ANSWER NEVER COMES, AS-- DRIVING OUT OF THE LAMP-LIGHT ABOVE--

WHAT THE--*THAT BIRD*--COMIN' RIGHT *AT* ME--

:YAAAAAAAH!:

--GET IT AWAY! GET IT AWAAAAAAAAAY!

SCORPION--!

THAT STUPID FOOL--WHAT HAS HE DONE *NOW?*

BROK

THAT NO LONGER *CONCERNS* YOU, HYDE.

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T *NOTICED*-- YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS OF YOUR *OWN!*

VERY GOOD, BUSTER.

YOU CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD...BUT I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN.

NOT YOU... OR ANYONE FROM SHIELD!

SHIELD? IS THAT IT--

YOU'RE AFTER THEM--?

DON'T GIVE ME THAT, AVENGER.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY GAMES.

THAT CREEP NEEDS HELP--

--BUT NOT FROM YOU, HYDE!

THAT BLASTED THING'A YOURS IS EVERY-WHERE!

BTANG

BUT IT DOESN'T SCARE ME, PAL--

I JUST GOT SIGHT OF WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR--

--'CAUSE THIS WHOLE BUSINESS IS JUST ABOUT OVER, UNDERSTAND?

--THE LITTLE LADY WE FOLLOWED FROM SHIELD HQ--

--THE ONE WE SAW TALKIN' WITH NICK FURY--!

HER--

--SHARON CARTER!

AND BEFORE CAPTAIN AMERICA CAN MOVE--BEFORE HE CAN COMPLETE HIS FORWARD DIVE TO RETRIEVE HIS SPINNING SHIELD--

--IT'S OVER--

--AND DONE!

MASSIVE HANDS CLAMP SHUT, JERK BACK--AND CAP FREEZES, NOT DARING TO MOVE--!

THAT'S RIGHT, HANDSOME--TAKE IT EASY.

--UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR FELLOW SHIELD AGENT--TO DIE!

CAP, DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! FIND NICK--TELL HIM WHAT'S--

SO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER, HMMN?

THAT MAKES IT A LOT SIMPLER, SISTER!

=UNNNH!=

FOR A MOMENT, SHARON CARTER STRUGGLES--THEN, HER BODY GOES LIMP, MOTIONLESS--

SHARON... NO!

HYDE, IF YOU'VE HARMED HER--!

DON'T BE A FOOL, LIKE THAT MINDLESS CLOWN, THE SCORPION!

WHAT GOOD WOULD KILLING HER DO ME, MY FRIEND--?

THERE ARE THINGS THE SCORPION AND I NEED TO KNOW!

"AND SPEAKING OF GOGGLE-EYES...

HAH!

ALL IT NEEDED WAS A TASTE OF MY TAIL--!

"...LOOKS LIKE HE'S HOLDING HIS OWN, AFTER ALL!"

WHICH IS ALL YOU NEED, FRIEND.

SEEMS WE WERE INTERRUPTED--BUT NOW WE CAN GET BACK TO IT, RIGHT?

--OR ARE YOU AFRAID, MISTER?

THAT'S HOW IT BEGINS--WITH A WORD, A SINGLE, CUTTING INSULT--

--AND IN THE SPAN OF AN INSTANT, MEMORIES RETURN, BITTER--BURNING--!

HE STRAIGHTENS, LEAVING HIS CROUCH, FIRMING THE LINE OF HIS JAW AS HE STEPS FORWARD--

YES, THAT'S HOW IT BEGINS--THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A NEW SELF-UNDERSTANDING--

MISTER, YOU JUST BLEW IT.

YOU JUST BLEW IT BAD!

HE SMILES, A MOCKING, SELF-ASSURED GRIN...

A LAUGH STARTS DEEP IN HIS THROAT, BUBBLING TO THE SURFACE...

...AND DYING, AS THE FALCON CONTINUES HIS ADVANCE...

FROWNING, THE SCORPION WONDERS... WHAT SORT OF MAN APPROACHES A MORE POWERFUL MAN IN BATTLE...?

WHAT SORT OF MAN HAS EYES AS COLD, FEATURES AS GRIM AS THOSE ON THE MAN BEFORE HIM--?

SUDDENLY, INSTINCTIVELY-- FEARFULLY--

--THE SCORPION KNOWS!

THIS SORT OF MAN--THIS MAN--THE FALCON!

G-GET BACK--

--GET B-BACK, BLAST YOU!

THAT'S RIGHT, GREENIE --PANIC!

--PANIC, AND SWING WILD!

THIS ONE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR ME, SCORP-- SOMETHING I OWE TO CERTAIN SO-CALLED FRIENDS--

--THIS ONE I'M GONNA ENJOY!

BWHANG!

WHAT IN THE--?

CAP! WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO DO? I ALMOST HAD HIM--

ANOTHER MOMENT, AND--

--AND SHARON WOULD BE DEAD, FALCON.

I'M...SORRY, MY FRIEND. BUT YOU SEE...

...WE'RE BEAT.

I'M REALLY GLAD YOU SEE THAT, HANDSOME.

BUT DON'T WORRY-- WE'LL BE IN TOUCH. YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE --YET!

BUT RIGHT NOW--

SCORPION! WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT, DOLT?

ONE THING I'VE GOTTA DO, HYDE--!

NEXT TIME, FALCON--YOU'RE GONNA REALLY FEEL THE SCORPION'S STING!

THAT MUCH I PROMISE YOU.

CAP, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THAT COST ME.

DON'T I, FALCON?

BUT IT'S NOT OVER--NO, ONLY BEGINNING.

FOR, LESS THAN ONE MINUTE AFTER SHARON'S KIDNAPPING, A SLEEK BLACK SEDAN SLIDES TO A SCREECHING HALT OUTSIDE THE SHIELD TOWNHOUSE--AND A FAMILIAR FIGURE LEAPS OUT: NICK FURY, SHIELD'S UBIQUITOUS DIRECTOR...

ROGERS, YA REALLY DID IT, THIS TIME--

OR MAYBE YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND--I MEANT WHAT I SAID ABOUT YOUR SHOWING UP AGAIN--!

MISTER, ARE YOU HEARIN' ME?

HE'S LISTENING, MAN... BUT I WOULDN'T RIDE HIM.

NOT NOW.

YOU KEEP OUTTA THIS, FALCON.

I ASKED THE MAN A QUESTION... AND I'M WAITIN' FOR MY BLASTED ANSWER.

DO ME A FAVOR, FURY...

...GET OUT OF MY LIFE!

IN CASE YOU HADN'T GUESSED, FURY...

...YOU JUST MADE THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF YOUR CAREER!

TO BE CONTINUED!

CAPT. AMERICA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON

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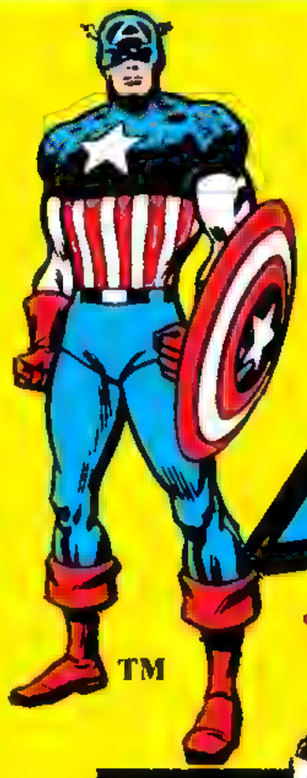


CRY VENGEANCE!

WITH THE SCORPION AND MR. HYDE!

IMPORTANT! SEE THE SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS COVER ON THE LETTERS PAGE!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

TERROR IN THE NIGHT!

RAIN POUNDS THE HARD BLACK TAR OF THE EAST RIVER DRIVE --AND IN STORMY DARKNESS, A LITHE FIGURE DIVES--

--FOR AN INSTANT, HE'S FRAMED IN THE SPLASH OF SILVER HEADLIGHTS--THEN, MUSCLES RELAXING TO CATCH HIS FALLING WEIGHT, HE LANDS--!

KREEEEE KREEEE

--AND THE SOUND OF HIS LANDING IS COVERED BY ANOTHER SOUND--THE WILD SHRIEK OF AN ATTACKING BIRD--

--A RED AND BROWN DEMON MEN HAVE COME TO CALL: REDWING--THE FALCON HAWK!

KREEEE

STAN LEE * EDITOR
GERRY CONWAY * WRITER
SAL BUSCEMA * ARTIST

F. GIACOIA, INKER * JOHN COSTANZA, LETTERER

HEY! TRYIN' TO GET US KILLED, YOU FOOL? LOOK WHERE YOU'RE--

HEEEOW! WHAT IN--

SOME SORTA NUTTY BIRD!

CAN'T SEE THE ROAD-- IT'S COMIN' RIGHT AT US--

KEEEEERIPES!

SKEEEEEEEE

WHAM

NOW YOU'VE DONE IT, ROCKY!

THE MAN'S GONNA HAVE YOUR HIDE FOR THIS!

CURSING, THE MEN PULL THEMSELVES FREE OF THE TWISTED CAB-- AND AS THEY DO, THE OLDER MAN CHANCES A CASUAL GLANCE SKYWARD, AND SEES--

THE FALCON!

I KNEW I RECOGNIZED THAT CRAZY PIGEON!

WELL, BUSTER-- YOU'VE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW, THIS TIME--!

C'MON DOWN AN' MEET SMASHER KREEL!

MISTER, IF YOU WEREN'T SO FUNNY--YOU'D BE TRAGIC.

I'VE HEARD THAT ROUTINE A HUNDRED TIMES--

-- IT NEVER CHANGES!

EVERY PETTY *THUG* WITH A GUN IN HIS HAND THINKS HE'S THE GREATEST THING ON TWO *LEGS*--

KRUMP

--AND FRIEND, EVERY *ONE* OF THEM'S BEEN WRONG -- *DEAD* WRONG!

*HE DRAWS A **BREATH**, THIS MAN CALLED THE FALCON--AND SUDDENLY, HE'S AWARE OF THE **WEARINESS** IN HIS BONES, THE THROBBING **ACHE** IN HIS SPINE--*

SCREEEEEEE

AGE CO.

*--THEN HE HEARS A FAMILIAR **SCREECH**, AND HE WHIRLS TO SEE--*

REDWING!

*EYES WILD, HIS VOICE NOTHING BUT A RAGE-BLURRED **SNARL**, THE DRIVER FIRES AGAIN AND AGAIN-- AND THE HAWK **SCREAMS**, WINGS POUNDING--*

*--A SCREAM THAT'S **LOST** IN THE ROAR OF THE STORM--LOST, WITH THE DRIVER'S **OWN**!*

KRAK

MISTER... NOBODY SHOOTS AT REDWING. *NOBODY.*

HE STANDS SILENTLY FOR A MOMENT, **STARING** AT THE DRIVER'S SLUMPED FORM. THEN, HE GOES TO THE **REAR** OF THE TRUCK...

ALLIED CHEMICAL CORP

ALLIED CHEMICAL CORP

THERE, HE **FINDS** WHAT HE'S BEEN SEARCHING FOR... A CARGO OF PURLOINED **CHEMICALS**...

SORRY, PAL. YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOUR COURAGE **ANOTHER** WAY.

:AAAAHHHH!: MY WRIST-- YOU BROKE MY **WRIST!**

NOT **QUITE,** KREEL.

...BUT I **WILL** BREAK YOUR MOUTH...UNLESS IT TELLS ME THINGS I WANT TO **KNOW.**

THING ONE: **WHO** PAID FOR THOSE CHEMICALS, KREEL? TELL ME **NOW!**

THOSE OF YOU WHO READ OUR LAST ISSUE MAY BE WONDERING--WHAT GOES **ON** HERE?

FOR THE **ANSWER,** LET'S TURN TO YET ANOTHER RAIN-SOAKED FIGURE--

-- THE MAN CALLED **CAPTAIN AMERICA!**

I MIGHT AS WELL **ACCEPT** IT...I DON'T HAVE A **CHANCE** OF FINDING THE SCORPION OR MISTER HYDE...

...NOT ON A NIGHT LIKE **THIS...!**

IF ONLY I'D BEEN ABLE TO **WARN** SHARON... IF NICK FURY HADN'T BEEN SUCH A **FOOL...**

FURY! YES IT'S HIS FAULT--ALL OF IT, HIS FAULT!

THOSE TWO DIDN'T WANT ME-- THEY WANTED SHIELD--

"WHEN THEY ATTACKED ME ON THAT DESERTED SIDE-STREET, THEY THOUGHT I WAS A SHIELD AGENT--ONE OF NICK FURY'S OPERATIVES--

"--AND WHEN I BEAT THEM OFF, THEY WENT AFTER THE ONLY OTHER AGENT THEY KNEW ABOUT--

"--SHARON CARTER!

"IF I HADN'T BEEN LOCKED OUT OF THE SHIELD TOWNHOUSE DORM, I COULD HAVE STOPPED HER--

"INSTEAD, ALL THE FALCON AND I COULD DO WAS FIGHT--

"--AND WATCH HELPLESSLY AS HYDE CAUGHT HER AND CARRIED HER AWAY.

"YES, IT WAS FURY'S FAULT--

"--AND THAT'S WHY I HIT HIM WHEN HE ARRIVED MOMENTS LATER--

"--TO MAKE HIM PAY FOR WHAT HE'D DONE!"

BUT WHO AM I KIDDING?

I WAS ANGRY WITH FURY, SURE... BUT I WAS MORE ANGRY AT MYSELF.

I WAS THE ONE WHO FAILED SHARON.

ME... CAPTAIN AMERICA.

THE STORM'S GETTING PRETTY *BAD.* WELL, MISTER ROGERS, YOU'D BETTER GET *MOVING*--

--BECAUSE, UNLESS I MISS MY *GUESS*--

--IT'S GONNA BE A *LONG NIGHT,* SCORPION.

WHERE ARE THOSE FOOLS WITH THE *CHEMICALS* I SENT FOR?

YEAH, I WAS MEANIN' TO *ASK* YOU ABOUT THAT, HYDE--WHAT D'YA WANT WITH ALL THAT *JUNK* ANYWAY?

FRIEND, THAT'S NONE OF YOUR *BUSINESS.*

YOU AND YOUR PITIABLE PLOT TO GAIN REVENGE ON SHIELD ARE NO LONGER MY *CONCERN*--

--AND *NEITHER* IS THE YOUNG LADY!

SAY WHAT YOU WILL, HYDE... SHE'S OUR *MEAL TICKET.*

...A PRETTY BIT OF *BAIT* FOR THOSE TWO SHIELD CREEPS.

PERHAPS. UNTIL THAT TIME, DON'T *BOTHER* ME...

CALL ME WHEN THE TRUCK ARRIVES... AND NOT *BEFORE!*

HE'S *NUTS.* BUT MAYBE HE'S GOT THE RIGHT *IDEA*--

WISH I COULD RELAX... BUT THE THOUGHT OF GETTIN' THAT BUM *FRIEND* OF YOURS...

DON'T BE A *FOOL.*

LITTLE WOMAN-- *WE'VE GOT THIS!*

KRASH

THEY'LL *PAY* FOR LOCKIN' US UP, HYDE... YOU'LL SEE.

WHAT HOPE DO *EITHER* OF YOU HAVE AGAINST CAP AND THE FALCON?

THE ECHOES OF THE SCORPION'S SLASHING BLOW REVERBERATE THROUGH THE DAMP LOFT ROOM -- AND AS SHE LISTENS TO THEIR FADING TONES, SHARON CARTER LETS HER MIND SLIP TO OTHER THINGS --

AND FOR A MOMENT, SHE WONDERS ABOUT THE MAN CALLED NICK FURY, THE DIRECTOR OF THE AGENCY KNOWN AS SHIELD --

--SHE WONDERS IF HE KNOWS OF HER PLIGHT -- AND SHE WONDERS WHAT HE PLANS TO DO!

THOUGH SHE'S UNABLE TO EAVESDROP OF FURY'S ROILING THOUGHTS, PERHAPS WE MAY GAIN A MODICUM OF INSIGHT BY DOING JUST THAT...

...SHOULDN'T HAVE BLOWN UP AT CAP, BLAST IT.

AFTER ALL, MAYBE I'VE BEEN MAKIN' A MISTAKE... IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE, AN' IT'LL PROBABLY HAPPEN AGAIN.

BUT NOT THIS TIME. THE MAN WAS MAKIN' TIME WITH MY LADY.. AND THAT'S SOMETHIN' I JUST WON'T TAKE.

YET IF THAT'S TRUE... THEN WHAT WAS HE DOING TRYIN' TO SEE SHARON CARTER?

PROBABLY TRYIN' TO PLAY IN BOTH BALL PARKS!

WELL, I'VE HAD IT TO HERE WITH THAT GLORY BOY!

NICK, COULD I TALK WITH YOU A MINUTE?

YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN!

HUH? EXPLAIN WHAT, VAL--? WHY YOU FELL FOR A GUY LIKE CAP?

FRANKLY, LADY--I'M JUST NOT INTERESTED.

NICK--IT'S NOT THAT WAY AT ALL--

WHEN YOU STARTED PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO LAURA BROWN-- I WANTED TO MAKE YOU JEALOUS--

--IT-IT WAS SILLY, I KNOW--I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT--BUT THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I WENT AFTER CAP--

THE ONLY REASON, NICK!

YEAH? S'AT SO, CONTESSA?

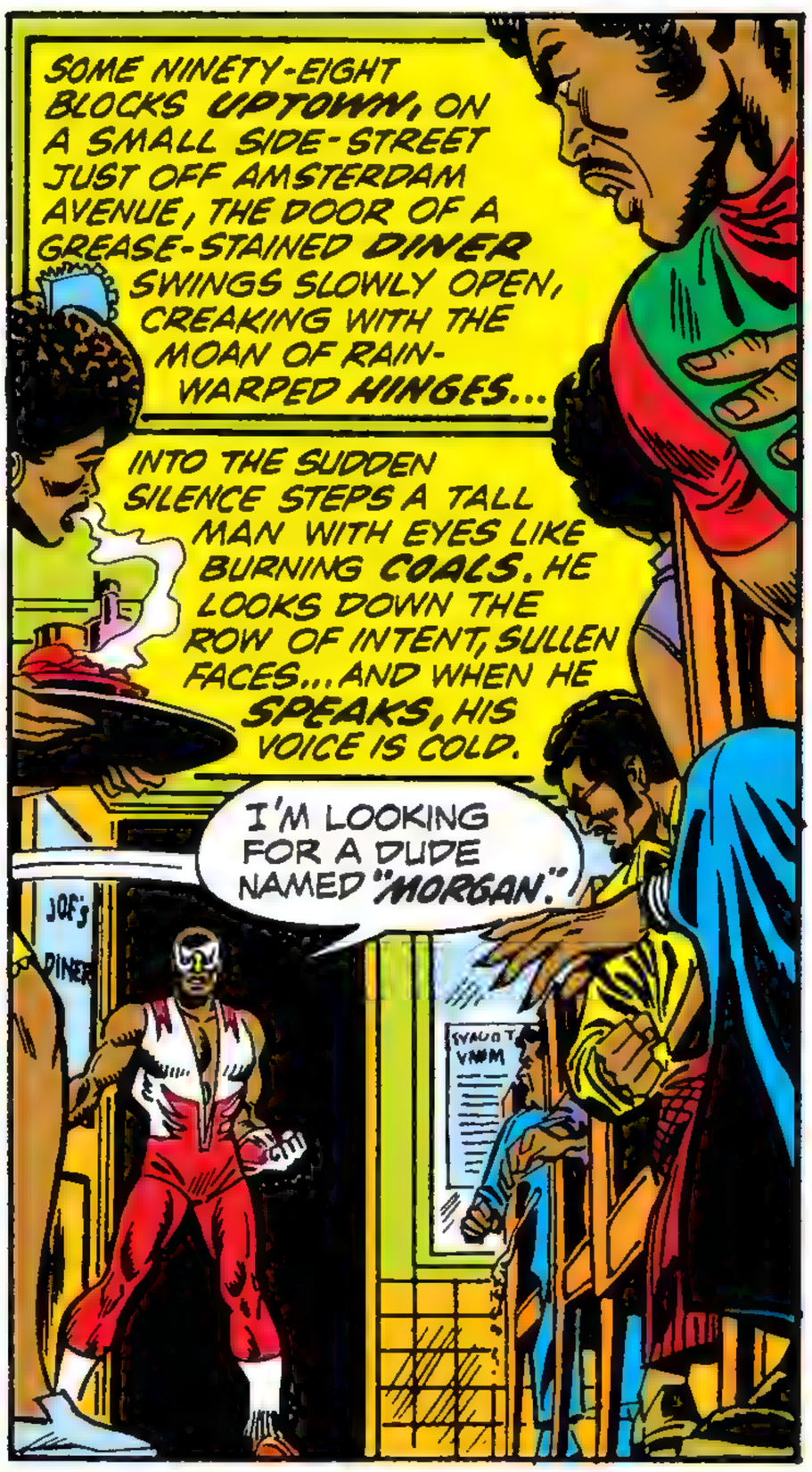
WELL, Y'KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH ALL THAT, KID?

YOU CAN WRAP IT--

-- AND YOU CAN SEND IT BACK WHERE YOU GOT IT--

-- AND YOU CAN LEAVE ME ALONE!

OL. FURY


SOME NINETY-EIGHT BLOCKS UPTOWN, ON A SMALL SIDE-STREET JUST OFF AMSTERDAM AVENUE, THE DOOR OF A GREASE-STAINED DINER SWINGS SLOWLY OPEN, CREAKING WITH THE MOAN OF RAIN-WARPED HINGES...
INTO THE SUDDEN SILENCE STEPS A TALL MAN WITH EYES LIKE BURNING COALS. HE LOOKS DOWN THE ROW OF INTENT, SULLEN FACES... AND WHEN HE SPEAKS, HIS VOICE IS COLD.
I'M LOOKING FOR A DUDE NAMED "MORGAN."
JOE'S DINER

YOU'VE FOUND HIM, LITTLE MAN.
SAY YOUR PEACE AND SPLIT.
UH-UNH, FATSO. WHAT I'VE GOT TO SAY IS PRIVATE... DIG?
RENO, LET'S FLATTEN THIS CREEP... HARD!

WATCH IT, MISTER--
--YOU KEEP CHARGIN' AROUND LIKE THAT-- YOU'RE LIKELY TO HURT YOURSELF--
--SEE WHAT I MEAN?

BK BOOM

BILLIE NEVER *WAS* A VERY QUICK KID--

--BUT YOU'RE UP AGAINST ONE 'A THE *BIG* BOYS NOW, FRIEND--

--AND, *PUNK*, YOU DON'T STAND A—

THRUMP

*CATLIKE, HE **STRAIGHTENS.** HE LETS OUT A BREATH LIKE A SIGH, AND THEN **TURNS**, HIS CHEST RISING AND FALLING-- CONTROLLED, UNSTRAINED--*

NOW IT'S *YOUR* TURN... *MISTER* MORGAN.

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUSTER--BUT I'M A BIG MAN-- A BIG MAN IN THIS *TOWN*--

WE-WE CAN FIND *OUT*-- AN'--AN' WHEN WE *DO*--

S-STAY *BACK*-- STAY BACK, *BLAST* IT--!

FAT MAN, YOU'RE SCARIN' ME *SILLY.*

NOW I'M NOT GONNA ASK YOU *TWICE:* A GUY NAMED KREEL SAYS YOU ORDERED A BATCH'A *CHEMICALS*--

-- CHEMICALS FOR A MAN CALLED *HYDE!*

WHERE *IS* HE, MORGAN? OR MAYBE YOU'D *LIKE* HAVING YOUR FACE REARRANGED?

*BLUBBERING ALMOST INCOMPREHENSIBLY, MORGAN BEGINS TO TALK, AND AS HE **DOES**--*

Y'KNOW, THAT FALCON AIN'T AT *ALL* LIKE THEY SAY HE IS --

YOU GOT IT, LITTLE BOB.

THAT'S ONE *HEAVY* TOM.

MEANWHILE, SEVERAL BLOCKS SOUTH AND TO THE **EAST**, IN THE SWIRLING DARKNESS OF A RAT-INFESTED **SEWER**--

--NOTHING.

RETRACING HYDE'S FOOTSTEPS IS **USELESS**... NEITHER HE **NOR** THE SCORPION WOULD BE **STUPID** ENOUGH TO COME BACK HERE.

TOO TIRED TO **THINK** STRAIGHT...

...AND BESIDES, IT'S TIME **STEVE ROGERS** REPORTED IN...!

THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN **DO**...

...BUT PRAY HYDE **CONTACTS** ME... AND **SOON**.

AND SO, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, IN A PRECINCT HOUSE ON THE **LOWER EAST SIDE**...

15TH

UH-OH. MULDOON LOOKS IN A **FOUL** MOOD.

BETTER KEEP **CLEAR**, ROGERS...!

HMPH. NOW **THAT'S** STRANGE... MULDOON PASSING UP A CHANCE TO CHEW ME OUT.

NEVER SEEN HIM **LOOK** LIKE THIS BEFORE...

...AS THOUGH HE'D BEEN **BEATEN** IN SOME WAY.

SAY, BOB... WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE **SARGE**?

SOMEBODY **STEAL** HIS FAVORITE CIGAR?

NOT **QUITE**, ROGERS...

SEEMS LIKE MULDOON'S BEEN **HIDING** A FEW THINGS OVER THE PAST COUPLE 'A YEARS...

...THINGS A SPECIAL CITY HALL COMMISSION HAVE JUST **DUG UP**.

HE'S BEEN **SUSPENDED**, ROGERS... AND MAYBE IT'S GONNA COST HIM HIS **JOB**...

...AND A YEAR OR TWO IN **JAIL**!

NO!

I CAN'T **BELIEVE** IT, BOB. THE MAN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ISN'T **MULDOON**.

YEAH, SURE. MAYBE HE'S BEEN **FRAMED**, ROGERS.

...AFTER ALL, MULDOON AIN'T THE SORT WHO MAKES A LOT 'A **FRIENDS**.

AND WHAT OF THE MAN IN QUESTION? WHAT OF THE MAN NAMED MULDOON?

HE WALKS WITH SHOULDERS DROOPING, HIS JAW SET FIRM... BUT SOMEHOW TREMBLING...

...AND WHEN HE LEAVES THE SHELTER OF THE BRIGHTLY-LIT STATION HOUSE, HIS STEP IS LESS SURE THAN IT'S EVER BEEN BEFORE...

IT'S NOT HARD TO HURT A MAN.

...EVEN A ROUGH MAN LIKE MULDOON. BUT HAVING HURT HIM...

...HAVE YOU BROKEN HIM? HAVE YOU?

THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS WHICH TURN IN STEVE ROGERS' MIND...QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS, FOR THE ANSWERS LIE ONLY IN MULDOON'S SOUL.

C'MON, BOB. LET'S GET READY FOR OUR PATROL.

NOW THE HOURS PASS QUICKLY--MINUTES FILLED WITH IDLE CHATTER, CONVERSATION TO DULL THE DOUBLE-EDGED KNIFE TWISTING WITHIN A VERY WEARY STEVE ROGERS...

NOT FOR A MOMENT DO HIS THOUGHTS LEAVE SHARON CARTER--

--NOR DOES HE FORGET HIS OWN GRIM HELPLESSNESS, A FRUSTRATION WHICH FILLS HIS MIND WITH TENSION AND PAIN--UNTIL--

BOB, STOP THE CAR!

THAT BIRD OUT THERE--

I SEE IT, STEVE. MUST'VE GOTTEN OUTTA THE ZOO...

...'CAUSE YOU JUST DON'T SEE MANY OF THEM IN NEW YORK THESE DAYS.

POLICE

STAY HERE, BOB. I'LL BE BACK... IN A MOMENT.

THE RAIN FALLS MORE GENTLY, NOW... ITS SOUND IS SOFT AND MUTED...

...AS MUTED AS A SUDDEN, WHISPERED EXCLAM-ATION!

SAM! WHERE IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN HAVE YOU BEEN, MAN?

LOOKING, STEVE...IN PLACES ONLY A GUY LIKE ME COULD REACH.

THERE WERE LEADS...A FEW HINTS. NOTHING I COULD TELL YOU BEFORE.

THEN TELL ME NOW..

DID YOU FIND THEM? IS SHARON SAFE?

I DON'T KNOW, STEVE. THAT'S WHY I'VE COME FOR YOU.

GUESS I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO FACE THEM DOWN TOGETHER.

THANKS, SAM...AND I MEAN THAT.

IT'S GOING TO CAUSE PROBLEMS... BUT RIGHT NOW, I COULDN'T CARE LESS.

I'VE BEEN WORRIED SICK OVER SHARON FOR HOURS--

--AND HATING MYSELF FOR BEING UNABLE TO DO ANY-THING TO HELP HER--

"BUT NOW--THAT'S CHANGED. I CAN'T LET ANYTHING HOLD ME BACK--NOT IF I EVER WANT TO FACE MYSELF AGAIN--

"MAYBE THAT'S WHAT CARING REALLY IS--A SENSE OF COMMITMENT TO ANOTHER PERSON--

"--YEAH-- COMMITMENT."

STEVE, ARE YOU BACK TH--STEVE! STEVE!

BUT THE MAN CALLED STEVE ROGERS IS GONE--

-- HIS ALTER-EGO ALREADY A DOZEN BLOCKS AWAY!

...A FENCE, SAM?

ACTUALLY A PART-TIME PAWNBROKER... FELLA BY THE NAME OF WEISSIER.

HE TOLD ME ABOUT THE TRUCK-- AND ITS STRANGE CARGO--

-- AND YOU JUST TOOK IT FROM THERE.

MR. WILSON... HOW MUCH WOULD YOU SAY THAT MAKES ME OWE YOU, TO DATE?

IN MY BOOK, MISTER ROGERS... NOT A THING.

NOT A THING.

MINUTES FLOW LIKE SECONDS--

--AND WHEN TWENTY OF THEM HAVE SUMMARILY PASSED--

S & B CO. STORAGE

THERE.

THIRD FLOOR... A LOFT AREA, STORAGE SPACE ON THE SECOND FLOOR.

ANY SUGGES-TIONS?

THE FALCON SHRUGS... "IT'S YOUR GAME," HE WHISPERS...

AND WHAT OF THE OTHER PLAYERS? ONE OF THEM, AT LEAST, HAS HIS MIND ON OTHER THINGS...

...ON MEMORIES OF A DISTANT ORIGIN,* AND VALIANT BATTLES WITH THE ADVENTURER KNOWN AS SPIDER-MAN...

*SPIDEY #20. -- STAN.

Y'KNOW, LADY-- EVERY TIME I THINK ABOUT HOW JAMESON, THAT PUBLISHER GUY, WANTED TO MAKE ME INTO SOME SORTA SUPER-HERO--

WELL, IT GIVES ME A KINDA KICK--

HAH! YEAH, IT MAKES EVERYTHING SORTA WORTHWHILE-- JUST TO KNOW WHAT A FOOL I MADE OUTTA THAT CREEP--

-- JUST LIKE ME 'N HYDE ARE GONNA DO TO FURY-- AND THE REST OF THOSE CRUMMY AGENTS OF SHIELD!

LET US KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO TRY, SCORPION--

--THAT'S SOMETHING WE'D LIKE TO SEE!

CAPTAIN AMERICA!

GOOD GUESS-- AND JUST TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT--

--I'M NOT A MEMBER OF SHIELD--

--NEVER HAVE BEEN--

--NEVER WILL BE!

FALCON! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME-- HELP CAP!

HYDE WILL BE BACK ANY MINUTE-- STEVE CAN'T HANDLE THEM ALONE--!

LADY, SINCE WHEN DOES CAPTAIN AMERICA NEED MY HELP IN A FIGHT?

--IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED--

--HE SEEMS TO BE HOLDING HIS OWN!

BTOK

AS THOUGH IN SILENT **REPLY** TO THE FALCON'S VOICED CONFIDENCE, CAP ABRUPTLY **DODGES** THE SCORPION'S NEXT BLOW, AND LUNGING **UNDER** THE ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED **TAIL**--

CRASH!

--HEAVES THEM **BOTH** OFF THE LOFT'S TREMBLING **LEDGE**--!

BREAKING HIS HOLD ON THE SCORPION'S SQUIRMING WAIST, CAP SPINS **FREE**--

--WHILE THE MADDENED SCORPION SAVES HIMSELF IN HIS **OWN** UNIQUE **STYLE**--

THAT **CUTS** IT, PAL--

I THOUGHT MAYBE I'D MAKE IT **SOFT** FOR YOU AND THE GIRL--

--BUT NOT **NOW**, BUSTER--**NOT NOW!**

REMIND ME TO BE **FRIGHTENED**, SCORPION.

BUT THEN, I'M NOT THE SORT WHO SCARES **EASILY**--

-- SO YOU **MIGHT** HAVE TO WORK ON IT A BIT HAR-- **WHAT?**

WHUMP

PLAYTIME'S **OVER**, CRUMB...

...'CAUSE NOW IT'S TIME... **FOR MISTER HYDE!**

ZAK

IT-IT DIDN'T BREAK-- DIDN'T EVEN BEND!

WHAT SORTA CRAZY STUFF IS THIS?

I CAN WRECK ANYTHING-- ANYTHING!

MAYBE HE CAN, SHARON--SO WHAT GIVES?

I DON'T KNOW, SAM! THERE'S SOME SORT OF MYSTERY BEHIND IT--

--BUT CAP'S NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT!

BUT STILL...

--HEY WAIT, HYDE ISN'T FINISHED--

CAP-- LOOK OUT!

BLAM

STRENGTH LASTS ONLY SO LONG-- THE HOURS WITHOUT SLEEP TAKE THEIR TOLL, AND EVEN A HERO MAY FALL--

--AND THEN MUST THE HERO TURN TO OTHER THINGS--

-- NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND--IT'S MY TURN!

NICE SHOT, HYDE--

--IF HE CAN!

CAP, CAP!

YOU'VE GOT TO HELP HIM, FALCON-- YOU'VE GOT TO!

I'M SICK'A THIS GUY'S MOUTH..

--AN' I'M GONNA TEACH HIM--THE SCORPION'S STRONGER THAN ANY-BODY-- ANYBODY!

HOLD IT, WOMAN... I SAID, *HOLD IT!*

MAYBE I KNOW WHAT I'M *DOING*--

--AND MAYBE YOU *DON'T.*

THINK ABOUT IT A MOMENT-- DO YOU *REALLY* WANT ME TO BAIL CAP OUT?

I-I JUST DON'T WANT HIM *HURT,* SAM--

--HE MEANS TOO *MUCH* TO ME-- I DON'T WANT TO *LOSE* HIM!

THEN LET HIM DO IT *ALONE.*

BELIEVE ME, SHARON... HE *CAN*...AND WHAT'S *MORE* IMPORTANT...

...HE *MUST!*

OUTSIDE, THE RAIN PATTERS A FUNERAL *BEAT* ON THE WAREHOUSE WALLS...

...A BEAT WHICH THROBS IN *RHYTHM* WITH THE PULSE OF STEVE ROGERS' *HEART*...

THROUGH A GROWING HAZE, HE *HEARS* THE SCORPION'S HEATED TAUNTS--HE KNOWS HIS *STRENGTH* IS WANING, THE FLESH TOO WEAK TO *SUPPORT* THE SOUL--

--AND YET, WHEN STRENGTH FAILS-- MIGHT NOT *WIT* PREVAIL?

NOW, SCORPION-- WE'LL SEE WHO'S BEATEN *WHOM!*

TELL ME, MISTER-- WHAT *GOOD* IS YOUR LASHING TAIL-- WHEN IT'S BOUND TOO CLOSE TO *MOVE?*

NO!

WHAT'S *WRONG,* SCORPION?

ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU *WANTED*-- JUST YOU AND *ME?*

S-STAY BACK-- YOU'D BETTER STAY *BACK*--

IT'S MAN TO *MAN*, NOW, SCORPION--ME WITHOUT MY *SHIELD*--

--*YOU* WITHOUT YOUR *TAIL!*

I GUESS THAT WAS JUST SOMETHING... YOU COULDN'T *TAKE.*

YEAH? AN' WHAT ABOUT ME, BRIGHT BOY?

LET'S SEE YA TRY *TRICKS*--WITH MISTER HYDE!

YOU!

TOO LATE, HE TURNS-- TOO LATE, HE *REMEMBERS*--AGAINST *THIS* MAN, WIT ALONE IS USELESS--

--HYDE IS TOO *STRONG*-- THE CHEMICALS WHICH CHANGED HIS FORM FROM THAT OF A WEAK *SCIENTIST* HAVE GIVEN HIM UNNATURAL *STRENGTH*--

-- STRENGTH ENOUGH TO LIFT A *CAR*-- STRENGTH ENOUGH TO SHATTER A *SPINE* LIKE A *TWIG*--!

THE TIME FOR WIT IS *PAST*-- THE MOMENT OF STRENGTH HAS *LEFT* HIM-- NOW, HE IS TRULY A MAN ALONE, DEPENDENT *SOLELY* ON HIS YEARS OF TRAINING-- ON HIS WILL-- AND *ULTIMATELY*--

-- ON HIS SKILL!

WHAK!

UMMMMPPHHH!

MY RIBS-- YOU MUST'VE BROKE MY RIBS--

FOR AN INSTANT, HYDE SWAYS, CHEEKS PUFFED WITH PAIN--

THEN HE TURNS AND CHARGES--

-- BUT THE CHARGE IS MEANINGLESS--

--FOR THE BATTLE-- IS OVER.

WHAM

KHUMP

SLOWLY, ALMOST HESITATINGLY, STEVE ROGERS UNCLENCHES HIS FISTS... AND THAT MOVEMENT SEEMS TO RELEASE A BOUND-UP COIL OF WEARINESS, WHICH SWELLS OPEN WITHIN HIM...

SAM... SHARON... LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. NOW.

STEVE, I TRIED TO COME TO YOU-- I DID--BUT HE WOULDN'T LET ME--

I-I THOUGHT THEY'D KILL YOU-- I THOUGHT-- YOU--

EASY, SHARON. IT'S OVER... FOR THE TIME BEING.

SAM, I'M NOT GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING...

JUST FORGET IT, CAP.

MISTER WILSON... SOME THINGS YOU CAN NEVER FORGET.

EXIT

C'MON, SHARON. I FEEL LIKE WALKING FOR A WHILE...

...WALKING ...WITH MAYBE A LITTLE BIT OF TALK.

AND THE SUBJECT OF THAT CONVERSATION? PERHAPS IT'S A TOKEN TO THE COMPASSION OF STEVE ROGERS THAT HIS THOUGHTS RETURN TO MULDOON--

MULDOON, WHO IS ONLY NOW REACHING HIS HOME IN ELMHURST, QUEENS...

SORRY I'M LATE, HON... COULDN'T SEEM... TO FIND MY WAY.

FUNNY, Y'KNOW? GETTIN' LOST AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

BRIAN-- WHAT IS IT?

SOME-THING'S WRONG!

WRONG? YEAH... YOU COULD SAY THAT.

SOMETHIN' ABOUT MONEY... SOME SORTA BRIBE...!

...Y'SEE... I'VE BEEN SUSPENDED, HONEY...

NO! IT ISN'T TRUE, BRIAN-- IT CAN'T BE TRUE!

IT IS, ELLEN...

...HONEY, BELIEVE ME... IT IS!

... AND AS SGT. BRIAN MULDOON FACES AN INCREASINGLY UNCERTAIN FUTURE, WE FACE --

NEXT: CAPTAIN AMERICA: FRAUD!

CAPT AMERICA

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

GET UP, CRUMB--SO I CAN BELT YOU CLEAR TO-- HUH??

THAT'S ONE OF MY PEOPLE, YOU'RE BEATIN' UP ON, CAP!

WELL, NOW YOU CAN WALTZ AROUND WITH ME!

CAPTAIN AMERICA--HERO or HOAX?

CAPTAIN AMERICA... HERO OR HOAX?

DUSTY DEWDROPS SMEAR THE BROKEN WINDSHIELDS OF ABANDONED CARS, AS THE DAWNING SUN TOSSES A PROMISE OF HEAT INTO THE HUMID, CHOKING AIR. OLD MEN SNIP THE TAUT COPPER WIRES WHICH BITE DEEP INTO THEIR DAILY NEWS WAKE-UP EDITIONS. DELICATESSENS FIRE UP FRESH BROWN COFFEE.

NEW YORK SNARLS HELLO TO ANOTHER SUMMER DAY.

NO WAY.

CLOSE BY GRAMERCY PARK, THREE WEARY PEOPLE ARE JUST SAYING GOODNIGHT, BEFORE LEAVING THE FABLED CAPTAIN AMERICA TO HIS LONELY, RUNDOWN HOTEL ROOM, AND A LONG OVERDUE SLEEP.

STAN LEE
Presents
STEVE ENGLEHART
WRITER,
SAL BUSCEMA
ARTIST

JIM MOONEY
INKER

JON COSTA
LETTERER

ROY THOMAS
EDITOR

910Z

I SUPPOSE WE SHOULDN'T BE WEARING OUR *COSTUMES* IN *STEVE ROGERS'* HOTEL, BUT FRANKLY, THIS *SECRET IDENTITY* THING--

HOLD IT! THERE'S SOMEBODY *HERE!*

BUT-- *WHO--??*

DON'T BOTHER WITH THE *LIGHT SWITCH,* LADY. I GOT A LAMP OVER *HERE.*

YOU!

I BEEN WAITIN' A LONG *TIME* FOR YA, CAP!

I BEEN SITTIN' HERE IN THE *DARK,* THINKIN' ABOUT *YOU,* AN' *ME,* AN' *SHIELD,* AN' *VAL!*

I CAME TO A *CONCLUSION,* TOO.

GET AGENT 13 AND THE FALCON *OUT* OF HERE-- ON THE *DOUBLE.* THIS IS THE *SHOW-DOWN,* MISTER-- AND IT'S JUST BETWEEN *YOU* 'N *ME!*

FURY, THIS IS *CRAZY!* I'VE DONE *NOTHING* TO YOU.

THE *TROUBLE* WE'VE HAD IS ALL A *MISUNDER-STANDING!*

YEAH, MAN -- WE'RE ALL DEAD *TIRED*. WE BEEN UP *ALL NIGHT*, PUTTIN' THE GRAB ON *YOUR* ENEMIES. *

YOU OWE US *GOOD* VIBES-- NOT *BAD* ONES, COLONEL.

* THE SCORPION AND MR. HYDE, LAST ISSUE. --SCOREKEEPER STAN.

NO DICE, BIG MAN! WHAT I OWE *CAP* IS WHAT I AIM TO *WORK OUT*-- RIGHT *NOW!*

SAM... SHARON... I THINK YOU'D BETTER *TAKE A WALK.*

*HE WAS CREATED TO USE HIS **FISTS**--AND HIS SKILL IN **BATTLE** IS **LEGEND**. YET IT'S THE WAR OF **WORDS** CAPTAIN AMERICA PLANS NOW-- WORDS TO **STOP** AN OLD FRIEND FROM DOING THE **WRONG THING**...*

*BUT THE **LOGIC**, THE **ARGUMENTS** DIE ON HIS TONGUE, AS HE STARES **LONG** AT THE FACE OF **NICK FURY**...*

*--AND HE SEES WHAT HE SAW IN THE **FALCON'S** EYES WHEN THE SCORPION PUSHED HIM **TOO FAR**-- WHAT HE **HIMSELF** FELT WHEN FURY RODE HIM **TOO HARD**...**

* ISH #151. --S.

*HE SEES TOTAL **DETERMIN-ATION**-- TO FIGHT TILL ONLY **ONE MAN** IS LEFT ON HIS FEET!*

I CAME *PREPARED* FOR YA, SUPERHERO--!

I GOT ME A *SHIELD ACTION SUIT*, COMPLETE WITH SOLID *STEEL* ARM-- SPECIALLY *MADE* TO FIGHT SOMEONE LIKE *YOU!*

--AND FIGHTIN'S THE *NAME* OF *THIS* GAME!

YOU MADE A PLAY FOR MY *GIRL*, CAP--

--AND MORE THAN *THAT*, YOU MESSED UP *SHIELD*-- TURNIN' MY AGENTS *AGAINST* ME!

MISTER, I DON'T TAKE *THAT* FROM *NOBODY!*

NO, NICK-- YOU'VE GOT IT *ALL WRONG!*

HE'S TRYING TO *JUSTIFY* ALL THIS TO HIMSELF-- BUT WHILE HE'S *TALKING*--

--I'LL *SEE* IF I CAN GENTLE HIM *DOWN!*

WATCH YOUR *FEET*, COLONEL-- OR YOU'LL *TRIP* AND *FALL!*

AND NOW THAT HE'S *OFF BALANCE*...

WHO THE HECK DO YA THINK YOU'RE *PLAYIN'* WITH, HERO--?

KLUNGG

-- SOME FUZZ-FACED *ROOKIE?*

THIS IS *NICK FURY*, BUSTER-- AND I'VE BEEN A BRAWLER FOR NEARLY *30 YEARS!*

OKAY, FURY-- SO YOU'RE AN *OLD SOLDIER*--

WHY DON'T YOU JUST *FADE AWAY?*

OLD, HUH?

MISTER, IF YOU WERE *TRYIN'* TA SAY THE *WRONG THING,* YOU DID IT JUST *RIGHT!*

THAT'S THE *LAST STRAW!*

I'VE HAD *ENOUGH* OF YOUR HURT FEELINGS, FURY--

--AND I'M *ENDING* THIS FARCE-- *NOW!*

NO *GOOD!* I'M TOO *TIRED!*

I *MISSED* HIM--THREW IT OUT THE *WINDOW*--

--AND THERE'S NO *PATH* FOR IT TO *RETURN* TO ME!

BLANG

YOUR SHIELD'S *GONE,* OLD BUDDY! NOW IT'S JUST YOU AN' YOUR *STRENGTH* AGAINST *ME* 'N MY *SHIELD* SUIT--!

JUST THE *TWO* OF US, *ALONE*-- DUKIN' IT OUT *MAN-TO-MAN!*

AND PRETTY *SOON* THERE'LL JUST BE *ONE!*

ME!!

BUT THE ANGRY MEN IN THE FOUR-DOLLAR ROOM ARE NOT ALONE-- NOT AS LONG AS THEY HAVE PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR THEM--

--PEOPLE LIKE THE FALCON, AND A GRIMLY DETERMINED SHARON CARTER!

THIS PHONE BETTER BE WORKING, SAM!

WE CAN'T AFFORD AN OUT-OF-ORDER SIGN!

THANK HEAVEN-- IT'S OKAY!

HELLO--SHIELD HEADQUARTERS? THIS IS AGENT 13, ON A PRIORITY OVERRIDE! PUT ME THROUGH TO CONTESSA VALENTINA ALLEGRO DE FONTAINE!

HURRY, MAN, OR--

WHAM

--THERE'LL BE HELL TO PAY!

NOT SO SLICK AGAINST A TRAINED FIGHTER, ARE YOU, CAP?

I DO OKAY, FURY--!

MAYBE BECAUSE I DON'T UNDERESTIMATE MY OPPONENT TWICE-- AND GET MOUSE-TRAPPED LIKE YOU!

-- AND MAYBE BECAUSE I KNOW WHAT I'M FIGHTING FOR!

KRUMP

--AND MAYBE BECAUSE DEEP DOWN *INSIDE*-- YOU *KNOW* THAT *YOU DON'T!*

BOOM!

YOU JUST CAN'T *SEE* IT, CAN YOU?

LISTEN, MISTER-- I ASKED YOU TO *JOIN SHIELD* A *LONG* TIME AGO--A *LONG TIME*--!

--AND WHILE YOU WAS MAKIN' UP YOUR PRIMA-DONNA *MIND,* I GAVE YA *FREE RUN* OF THE PLACE!

-- I EVEN PUT *MY AGENTS* AT YOUR BECK AND CALL!

GOT TO LEAP-- OVER THAT FINGER TORCH--!

--AND AFTER *ALL THIS TIME,* YOU TELL ME YOU GOT *NO USE* FOR ME *OR* MY GROUP!

NICK-- A MAN'S GOT TO--

DLONG!

A *MAN?* A *MAN?*

PAL, DO YOU KNOW I USED TO BE *YOUR* AGE--BEFORE YOU GOT YOURSELF *FROZEN SOLID* FOR 20 YEARS?

KRAK!

I KEPT ON *LIVIN'*-- *FIGHTIN'* FOR MY COUNTRY!

THROUGH WORLD WAR II, THE KOREAN WAR, THE COLD WAR-- I *LIVED* THOSE 20 YEARS, GETTIN' *GRAY* FOR AMERICA--

--AND THEN *YOU* POP UP, ALL *BLOND, BLUE-EYED*-- *AND YOUNG!*

SO THAT'S THE *REAL* REASON-- FINALLY!

WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF AMERICAN *HEROES*, THEY DON'T SEE US OLD, *UNSUNG* TYPES, QUIETLY BUSTIN' OUR *BACKS* FOR 'EM!

NO! THEY SEE *YOU*, GLORY BOY!

AND WHEN A GIRL LIKE *VAL* WANTS A *MAN*--

--SHE SEES *YOU*, NOT AN OLD *WAR-HORSE* LIKE *ME*!

NICK... OLD FRIEND..

CUT IT!

KRAK-A-BOOM

UHHH!

A MINUTE... GIMME A MINUTE TO CATCH MY BREATH...

SURE, NICK-- BUT YOU'RE GOING TO *LISTEN* TO ME WHILE YOU REST!

I WANT TO *TELL* YOU ABOUT BEING *FAMOUS*--

-- HOW IT'S MADE MY LIFE ONE LONG *FIGHT*--WITH EVERY PENNY-ANTE *CROOK* IN TOWN--AND EVEN WITH MY *FRIENDS*!

I DIDN'T *GAIN* 20 YEARS, BUDDY-- I *LOST* THEM!

FROZEN *ALIVE*, NICK-- *FROZEN ALIVE*!

I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT BEING *YOUNG*-- AND THE TERRIBLE *PRICE* I PAID FOR IT!

SHARON! IT'S SO QUIET IN STEVE'S ROOM--! WHAT IF THE FIGHT'S OVER? WHAT IF ONE OF THEM--EITHER OF THEM--HAS WON?

IT WON'T BE OVER TILL YOU TELL NICK HOW YOU FEEL, VAL!

IF YOU WANT TO FINISH THIS CRAZY FEUD, YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT!

SHE IS AN ARISTOCRATIC EUROPEAN COUNTESS--YET SHE HESITATES BEFORE THE CLOSED DOOR LIKE A LITTLE GIRL BEFORE THE PRINCIPAL...

...AND THEN RUSHES THROUGH IT LIKE ANY WOMAN IN LOVE!

NICK! NICK, DARLING! ARE YOU HURT?

LADY, THE GUY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR --IS THE ONE IN BLUE.

CAP? NO, NICK, NOT ANY MORE-- NOT EVER!

IT'S YOU I LOVE-- ONLY YOU!

GET AWAY FROM ME--!

WHY?? SO YOU CAN SUFFER SOME MORE? SO YOU CAN KEEP ON BEING A MARTYR?

OH NO, NICK FURY! YOU ENJOY YOUR PAIN TOO MUCH!

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WITH A SOUL? WHAT ABOUT ME-- WHEN YOU THREW ME OVER FOR LAURA BROWN? DO YOU THINK I DIDN'T ACHE?

I LOVE YOU, NICK-- WITH YOUR BEARD AND EYEPATCH AND INSUFFERABLE MALE EGO! I LOVE YOU!

BUT I-- YOU--

LEMME ALONE... FOR A SECOND...

I THINK MAYBE-- I'VE BEEN A BLASTED FOOL--!

HOWEVER, THE REST OF THE WORLD DOESN'T STOP TURNING FOR PRIVATE DRAMAS...

HEY, ROGERS! THIS IS THE MANAGER, DARN YOU!

OPEN UP THAT DOOR AND TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE! THE OTHER GUESTS BEEN LIGHTIN' UP THE SWITCHBOARD LIKE RUDOLPH THE REINDEER'S NOSE!

BAM BAM BAM

C'MON, ROGERS--I GOT COMPLAINTS!

HERE, MR. TRIMBLE. WE WERE HAVING A PARTY, AND SOME OF THE PEOPLE GOT A LITTLE RAMBUNCTIOUS..

--BUT THIS SHOULD COVER THE DAMAGES.

DAMAGES--SHMAMAGES.

AS IF ANYBODY IN THIS CRUMMY DUMP WOULD CARE HOW MUCH NOISE ANYBODY ELSE MAKES.

BUT SINCE ROGERS WAS KIND ENOUGH TO BANKROLL ME--

--I'M HEADIN' DOWN TO THE ALL-NIGHT POKER GAME IN LOUIE THE EEL'S ROOM, AND PRAY FOR FOUR ACES.

AND, WHILE CAL TRIMBLE HAS BEEN PLAYING RIP-OFF, NICK FURY HAS LOOKED INTO HIS SOUL...

CAP, I WANNA APOLOGIZE TO YA.

I WENT OFF HALF-COCKED--BUT THERE WERE THINGS THAT HAD BEEN EATIN' AT ME FOR A LONG TIME--AND I HAD TO CLEAR THE AIR OR GO NUTS.

I UNDERSTAND, NICK. IT'S ALL FORGOTTEN.

BUT YOU, AGENT 13--AS MUCH AS I'M SORRY FOR IT NOW, I DID GIVE YOU ORDERS NOT TO SEE CAP...

ORDERS ARE ONLY FOR AGENTS, COLONEL--AND I JUST QUIT.

WHAT?

IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF *TONIGHT*, SIR.

IT'S ONLY THAT THIS CRAZY *CONFLICT* BETWEEN MY *LOVE* AND MY *DUTY* HAS GOT TO *END*.

I'VE HURT A LOT OF *PEOPLE* BY NOT TAKING THIS STEP *BEFORE*.

NOW WAIT A CHICKEN-SCRATCHIN' *MINUTE*-- AM I GONNA HAVE TA FIGHT *YOU*, TOO?

I'M *SERIOUS*, SIR. DON'T TRY TO TALK ME *OUT* OF IT.

WELL...WHY DON'T YA JUST TAKE AN EXTENDED *LEAVE*-- WITH *PAY*--

--AND WHEN YA GET *BACK*, WE'LL *TALK* ABOUT IT SOME MORE?

NOW, COLONEL...

AHHH, *WOMEN!* YOU'RE *ALL* NUTS!

OKAY, YOU *LOVEBIRDS*-- *LEAVE* ME WITHOUT MY BEST AGENTS. SEE IF *I* CARE!

IF YOU WAS TA *HANG AROUND*, I'D HAVE TO *WORRY* ABOUT YA--

--AND ME AND *VAL* GOT *OTHER* THINGS TO DO.

LITTLE LADY, I'M *AWFULLY* PROUD OF YOU!

OH, *STEVE*...

...YOU'LL MAKE ME *BLUSH*!

WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, IN LOVE--AND FACED WITH SUMMER IN NEW YORK...YOUR THOUGHTS JUST NATURALLY TURN TO--

--A *VACATION*, STEVE?

WE'RE GOING TO GO WALK *BARE-FOOT* IN SOME *BAHAMAS SAND*...

RIGHT ON, SAM-- A LONG *OVERDUE* ONE FOR SHARON AND ME.

--AND JUST *ENJOY* OURSELVES FOR *ONCE*.

I CALLED IN *SICK* TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SO THERE'RE *NO* WORRIES TO FOLLOW US.

--EXCEPT HOW WE'LL GET *BACK*. THE TICKETS *DOWN* THERE WILL JUST ABOUT CLEAN ME *OUT*.

THEN *I* INSIST ON PAYING, DARLING. AFTER *ALL*, I'VE GOT *PLENTY* OF MONEY!

YOU *DO*? *I* NEVER KNEW ABOUT IT.

I NEVER HAD ANY REASON TO *SPEND* IT BEFORE.

SO *TELL* ME ABOUT IT.

OH, IT'S A *LONG* STORY.

I'LL BORE YOU WITH IT *LATER*!

SAM, I *KNOW* I CAN TRUST THE *FALCON* TO LOOK AFTER THINGS WHILE I'M GONE.

NO SWEAT, STEVE. YOU JUST HAVE *FUN*, AND GET A GOOD *TAN*--

--SO YOU WON'T *STAND OUT* SO MUCH UP IN MY *NEIGHBORHOOD*.

AND *YOU*, SHARON--YOU KEEP HIM AWAY FROM THOSE *OTHER* BIKINI-CLAD BEAUTIES, YOU HEAR?

I *GUARANTEE* HE WON'T EVEN *NOTICE* 'EM, SAM.

THERE THEY *GO*--AND LORD KNOWS THEY *DESERVE* SOME TIME TOGETHER, AFTER ALL THEY'VE BEEN THROUGH.

IT'S *SO* DARN CORNY--BUT WHEN IT'S ALL DONE, *LOVE'S* WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! *PEOPLE* LOVIN' *PEOPLE*.

DIG IT.

FOR LONG **MINUTES** AFTER THE 747 DISAPPEARS INTO THE HAZE, SAM WILSON STANDS LOST IN **REVERIE.**

THEN HE STRIDES **QUICKLY** THROUGH THE CROWDED TERMINAL AND OUT TO ONE OF THE GIANT **PARKING AREAS.**

YES, **SAM WILSON** WALKS OUT...

...AND THE FREEWHEELING **FALCON** FLIES AWAY!

AIRPORT PARKING

HECK, IF **THEY** CAN TRAVEL BY AIR, THEN SO CAN **I!**

JUST BELOW THE **SUN,** A REDDISH-BROWN **HUNTING BIRD** HANGS SUSPENDED IN THE YELLOW SKY. THEN ITS **TALONS** PULL BACK, IT DIPS A WING, AND IT SLICES CLEANLY **DOWNWARD,** TO **RENDEZVOUS** WITH ITS NAME-SAKE AND MASTER.

THE DUO TAKE IT **SLOW** AND **EASY** ON THIS JUNE AFTERNOON, AS THEY HEAD FOR HOME AND HARLEM...

THIS IS ONE HOT **TOWN** CAP WANTS US TO WATCH OUT FOR, REDWING.

STILL AND **ALL,** IT'S AWFUL FREAKIN' **FINE** TO GET THE **RESPONSIBILITY..**

--AND WE'RE GONNA DO THE **JOB!**

LOTS OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS OUT **COOLING OFF** TODAY...

--BUT-- **THOSE** TWO! THEY LOOK LIKE--

--LEILA... AND **RAFE MICHEL!**

THAT'S **MORE** THAN TWO PEOPLE **RELAXING**-- OR TALKING **POLITICS...**

...THAT'S MY **GIRL**-- **MAKING IT** WITH ANOTHER GUY!

OH YEAH--I SURE CALLED IT: "LOVE IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT."

"PEOPLE LOVING PEOPLE."

BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN THE PEOPLE INCLUDE YOU OUT?!

WE'LL LEAVE THE FALCON WITH HIS PAIN, TO LOOK BACK DOWNTOWN, SIX HOURS LATER--AS PATROLMAN BOB COURTNEY REPORTS FOR HIS REGULAR SHIFT.

EVENING, BOYS. HOW GOES THE WAR ON CRIME TODAY?

SAME AS ALWAYS, BOB--LOUSY.

OH--YOUR PARTNER ROGERS CALLED--

HE'S GOT THE FLU BUG. WON'T BE IN.

FLU--OR SOMETHING ELSE?

I WONDER IF I SHOULD TURN HIM IN FOR DESERTING HIS SHIFT LAST NIGHT--LEAVING HIS UNIFORM IN THAT ALLEY--?*

*LAST ISH, NATCH. --STAN.

NO, I WON'T GET HIM IN HOT WATER, TILL I KNOW MORE ABOUT IT.

--BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT ROGERS THAT'S NOT ON THE UP-AND-UP.

I HOPE HE FEELS BETTER SOON.

THIS MAKES THE SIXTH DAY ROGERS HAS MISSED SINCE HE JOINED UP.

HE'D BE IN FOR A GOOD TALKING-TO, IF MULDOON WERE HERE--

--BUT MULDOON ISN'T HERE.

UP ON CHARGES--DOESN'T SEEM POSSIBLE.

PERSONALLY, SARGE, I THINK HE WAS FRAMED.

PERSONALLY, DANIELS, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.

MULDOON'S A DARN GOOD COP!

MULDOON. HE PUT ROGERS IN MY PATROL CAR--!

MAYBE I SHOULD TALK TO HIM.

THE CITY SCARCELY COOLS FOR THE NIGHT--NO ONE RELAXES--AND WHEN MORNING ROLLS UP AGAIN, THE STILL AIR IS CHARGED WITH A QUIET TENSENESS...

HI, SAM! USUAL BREAKFAST?

NO--JUST ORANGE JUICE, FRED. TOO HOT TO EAT.

FRED'S FOOD

TALK ABOUT TOSSIN' AND TURNIN'! LYING THERE ALL NIGHT, DOG TIRED--AND ALL I COULD DO WAS THINK ABOUT LEILA AND RAFE.

HOT ROAST BEEF SANDWICH 1.60

BUT BACK OFF A SECOND, MAN--WHAT'S THAT I HEAR?

--FALCON CAME DOWN ON MORGAN LIKE THE BIG MAN WAS NOTHIN'.

PUT SOME HURT LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ON THAT FAT DUDE AND HIS BOYS!

SHOOT, JACK--I SAW HIM CLEANIN' UP THAT PUSHER-MAN A COUPLE A' WEEKS BACK! HE'S OUTTA-SIGHT!

WELL, ALL RIGHT! THAT'LL BRIGHTEN UP ANY SORRY SUPERHERO'S MORNING!

FRED'S FOOD

YEAH, AND THAT THERE'LL BRING HIM DOWN AGAIN.

LEILA! HEY, LEILA!

HEY YOURSELF, SOCIAL WORKER. GO START A YOUTH CLUB SOMEWHERE.

WHOA, LEILA! I KNOW WE HAVEN'T BEEN HITTING IT OFF TOO WELL LATELY, BUT--!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR HEART, BABY! NOT WHILE YOUR MIND'S WITH THE MONKEYS--

--AND THEY'RE SENDIN' ONE OF THEIR HEROES UP HERE TO BEAT ON THE BROTHERS, LIKE YESTERDAY!

WHAT? WHAT HERO?

WHERE'VE YOU *BEEN*, BABY? I'M TALKIN' ABOUT--

--*CAPTAIN AMERICA!*

YOU'RE *CRAZY!*

CRAZY, HUH? ASK *ANYBODY!*

--AND GET YOUR *HAND* OFF ME!

SHE *IS* CRAZY--SHE *MUST* BE! I PUT CAP ON A *PLANE* YESTERDAY!

BUT I COULDN'T TELL *HER* THAT!

THAT EXPLAINS WHY SHE'S BACK WITH THE *MILITANTS*-- BUT THAT'S *ALL* IT EXPLAINS.

HOW COULD PEOPLE THINK CAP WOULD WANT TO *HASSLE* ANYBODY? THEY *KNOW* WHAT KINDA GUY HE IS.

DOESN'T MAKE *SENSE!*

SKREEEEEE

FLAP THOSE *WINGS*, BROTHER BIRD!

WE MAY BE GUARDING THE *CITY* FOR CAP--BUT WE'RE GUARDING HIS *GOOD NAME*, TOO!

HOURS MELT LIKE ICE CUBES UNDER THE MERCILESS SUN, BUT CRIME SEEMS TO BE WAITING FOR DARK.

THE FALCON AND REDWING FIND NO CLUES.

GOTTA *REST*, AMIGO. LET'S GRAB A PIECE OF *SHADE* FROM THAT *CHIMNEY.*

SKREEEEEEEE

WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT'S *THAT*-- DOWN *THERE?*

IT CAN'T BE!

YOU'LL DO NOTHING, MISTER!

WHUMP!

I KNOW THIS BROTHER, AND YOU'VE GOT NO REASON TO BUST HIM!

ON YOUR FEET, CRUMB-- I'M GOING--

HOLD ON, FALCON. I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!

OKAY, YOU FRAUD-- I WANT SOME ANSWERS FROM YOU--AND RIGHT NOW!

WHAT--? THAT'S STEVE'S VOICE!

BUT HOW CAN THAT BE?

I KNOW HE'S OUT OF THE COUNTRY!

KLOM!

NEVER DROP YOUR GUARD WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING FOR KEEPS, BOY!

YOUR ENEMY CAN BE VERY *SLY* AND *CUNNING!*

HE'LL *ALWAYS* GET YOU WHEN YOU'RE FEELING *CONFIDENT!*

UHHH HIS *STRENGTH*-- INCREDIBLE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING *ON*--BUT THAT'S NOT *CAP!*

HE'S TOO *STRONG* --AND CAP WOULD NEVER CALL ME "*BOY*"!

STILL, IF HE WANTS TO TALK *CUNNING*...

TRY MY *HAWK HOOK*, MISTER!

BLANG!

HE *SHIELDED* HIMSELF--JUST LIKE *CAP!*

I DON'T *DARE* LET HIM HIT ME *AGAIN!* HE'S THE *STRONGEST* FOE I'VE EVER FACED!

THOOM

AH! HE'S GOT A WEAK *MIDSECTION!*

--*AND A GLASS JAW!*

PLAM

ALL RIGHT THEN--NOW THAT YOU'RE *GROGGY*--

--I'M GONNA SEE WHO YOU *REALLY* ARE UNDER THAT MASK!

NO! THIS IS *IMPOSSIBLE*-- BUT IT'S *TRUE!*

IT *IS* STEVE-- IT'S *CAP!*

WHAM

*RED AND BLUE PINWHEEL BEFORE HIS **EYES**-- HIS **KNEES** ARE SUDDENLY NOT THERE--AND THE **PAVEMENT** CLUBS HIM IN THE **JAW**.*

*MINUTES **LOSE** THEMSELVES IN DARKNESS, BEFORE THE FALCON'S **FIGHTING SPIRIT** CAN PULL HIM TO HIS KNEES.*

SOMEBODY... HIT ME... FROM BEHIND. HE--

OH GOOD LORD! AM I LOSING MY *MIND*?!?

YOU SET HIM UP JUST *RIGHT*, PARTNER.

WE'VE GOT HIM RIGHT WHERE WE *WANT* HIM!

YOU *BET,* LI'L BUDDY. NOW THERE'S *NOTHING* TO STOP THE *COMEBACK* OF--

-- THE *REAL* CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY!

HOLD IT RIGHT *THERE,* FRANTIC ONE! WE *SWEAR* THAT THIS IS *NOT*— (a) A *DREAM,* (b) A *HALLUCINATION,* (c) AN *IMAGINARY STORY,* OR (d) A PAIR OF *ANDROIDS* OR *ROBOTS!!*

THIS IS ALL *REAL!* AND IF *THAT* DOESN'T GRAB YOU, THEN THERE AIN'T NO *WAY!*

FACE IT, TIGER! YOU'VE JUST READ *CHAPTER ONE* OF THE MOST MIND-BENDING MARVEL MASTERPIECE *EVER* TO BE...

CONTINUED!

CAPT. AMERICA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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CAPTAIN AMERICA™ AND THE FALCON™

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE! CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST BE CAPTURED -- OR DESTROYED!!

STOP HIM! IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!!

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE!

THE FALCON FIGHTS ALONE!

WHO? WHO? WHO IS THIS MAN CALLING HIMSELF CAPTAIN AMERICA?

HE LOOKS LIKE CAP, HE SOUNDS LIKE CAP--YET HIS STRENGTH IS AWESOMELY SUPERHUMAN--AND MOREOVER--

--HE HAS A PARTNER NAMED BUCKY--BUCKY, WHO THE WORLD KNOWS DIED DURING WORLD WAR II!

WHO IS THIS MAN? THE QUESTION SCREAMS IN THE FALCON'S BRAIN--BEFORE PAIN SCREAMS IN HIS BODY, AS AN UNSTOPPABLE RIGHT HAND SMASHES HIM DOWN INTO DARKNESS!

UHHHH!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
STEVE ENGLEHART, author
SAL BUSCEMA, artist
JOHN VERPOORTEN, inker
J. COSTANZA, letterer
ROY THOMAS, editor 9902

HE'S HARDER TO PUT AWAY THAN I FIGURED, BUCKY.

WHEN WE DECIDED TO *LURE* HIM TO US BY ROUGHING UP SOME *COLOREDS*, I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THAT INTO *ACCOUNT*.

PHOOEY, CAP! HE JUST GOT *LUCKY*!

WHEN I *THINK* OF HOW THE NAMES OF *CAPTAIN AMERICA* AND *BUCKY* USED TO MAKE NAZIS AND COMMIES SHIVER IN THEIR *BOOTS*--

--AND THEN I REMEMBER THAT *THIS* BUM'S CARRYING ON THAT *TRADITION*...

YEAH, IT'S *SICKENING*. C'MON, LET'S FINISH HIM *OFF*!

BUT THE MYSTERIOUS DUO HAS *FORGOTTEN* THAT FIGHTING *HEARTS* COME IN *ALL* SIZES!

SKREEE

THE *BIRD*!

CLAWING MY *FACE*, BLAST HIM!

I'LL GET *HIM*, PAL! ONE THING WE *KNOW* IS HOW TO TOSS *SHIELDS*--

--AND TRASH CAN LIDS, *TOO*!

SKREEE

THAT CRUMMY FALCON--

--FLEW BETWEEN MY *LEGS* AND *TRIPPED* ME!

KLUNGE!

AND THAT GIVES *THIS* FALCON TIME TO GET HIS *WIND* BACK--

--YOU *WINDBAG!*

SKREEEE

THAT'S IT! FLY *OUT* OF HERE, BIRD!

CIRCUS

I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT *YOU*, TILL I GET THIS *COLORED CREEP* FOR SLUGGING CAP!

WHAT DID YOU SAY!?

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU TWO *ARE*--

--BUT I KNOW YOU'RE NOT WHO YOU *CLAIM* TO BE!

WHAM!

YOU'RE NOT EVEN *CLOSE* TO THE *REAL* CAP AND BUCKY!

YOU'RE A COUPLE OF COSTUMED *BIGOTS!*

THE AIR IN HARLEM IS FILLED WITH **MANY** THINGS THIS STARK DAY: HEAT, HUMIDITY, SMOG, TENSION, AND HATE-- AND A CIRCLING, **RESOURCE-FUL**--

--BIRD.' IT'S **REDWING**, THE **FALCON'S** BIRD, CHUNKY!

I **SAW** IT DARTIN'AROUND THE **ROOFS** IN HERE!

I BET THE **FALCON'S** GIVIN' IT TO SOME **PUSHER** OR SOMETHIN'!

OKAY, JODY, **OKAY!**

I WANNA SEE HIM TOO!

HOLY CROW!

SCORE ONE FOR GOOD **CRAFTSMAN-SHIP**, YOU FRAUDS!

YOUR **SHIELD'S** CRUMPLIN' UP LIKE A **GUM WRAPPER!**

BLAM!

CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH **LONGER**..

THEY'RE BOTH TOO **STRONG!**

BUNCH!

SHUT UP! SHUT FREAKIN' **UP!**

YOU CAN'T MAKE FUN OF **US!**

NICE **DOUBLE PLAY**, BUCKY!

THIS TIME I'LL USE MY **FULL** STRENGTH--

--AND KNOCK HIM FLATTER THAN A RUSSKIE'S **BANKBOOK!**

THUD!

GOOD **WORK**, LI'L PARTNER!

NOW WE'LL **MAKE** HIM TELL US WHERE THAT MUG CALLING HIMSELF **CAPTAIN AMERICA** IS HIDING.

--EVEN IF IT MEANS-- **TORTURE!**

THIS WAY, BUCKY! WE'LL CART HIM OVER TO *TYLER'S WAREHOUSE!*

BUT, *CAP*-- IT'S STILL IN *HARLEM!*

DON'T *WORRY*, PAL. THE *COLOREDS* NEVER BOTHER ANYBODY.

GET YOU SEAT IN GEAR, CHUNKY!

WE GOTTA *DO* SOMETHIN' ABOUT THIS!

TELL YOUR *UNCLE*, JODY-- *HE'D* KNOW WHAT TO DO.

YOU'RE *RIGHT!* LET'S *MOVE* IT!

*BUT, AFTER A HURRIED **DASH** ACROSS THE SHIMMERING **STREETS**...*

LOCKED UP TIGHTER 'N A *DRUM.*

SAM WILSON SOCIAL WORKER

AIN'T NO SIGN OF UNCLE SAM AT *ALL*-- AND THAT'S *WEIRD*, MAN! *

* JODY WOULDN'T *THINK* SO, IF HE KNEW HIS *UNCLE* WAS THE FREE-WHEELING *FALCON*. --SECRET-IDENTITY-WATCHING STAN & ROY.

MAYBE MY *MOM'LL* KNOW WHERE--

HEY! THAT'S *RAFE*--AND *LEILA!*

RAFE'S A *HONCHO* ON THIS BLOCK, CHUNKY. I BET *HE* CAN HELP!

VACANCY 2 1/2 RM UNFURN RENTING

LISTEN, BROTHER: WE GOT *TROUBLE!*

THE *FALCON*-- HE'S BEIN' HELD *PRISONER* AT TYLER'S WAREHOUSE--!

SO?

GIMME A *BREAK*, KID! IF THAT UNCLE TOM *SELLOUT'S* GOT HIS *HASH* IN A *SLING*--

--YOU THINK *I'M* GONNA GIVE A GOOD LUMP?

WHO *NEEDS* THAT BOOT-LICKIN' JIVER?

A MINUTE OF YOUR *TIME*, THERE, BROTHER. I THINK YOU GOT THE FALCON FIGURED *WRONG*.

HE'S DONE A LOTTA *GOOD* FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD-- SOMETHIN' I AIN'T SEEN *YOUR* GANG GETTIN' ON TOO OFTEN.

AND *BESIDES*-- NO MATTER *WHAT* YOU THINK ABOUT HIM--THE FALCON'S STILL *BLACK*.

RAFE... MAYBE HE'S *RIGHT*...

AAAHH--OKAY, IF YOU'RE *ALL* UP FOR IT.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO *DO*?

GET UP A *CROWD*, MAN-- ALL THE BROTHERS YOU CAN *FIND*, WHO DON'T MIND A LITTLE *ACTION*.

ALL *RIGHT* THEN! WAY TO *GO*!

ACTION'S MY MAIN *NAME*, BROTHER!

MY BOYS'LL MEET YOU *HERE* IN AN *HOUR*!

AND THIS *GIRL*, TOO, RAFE! I'M COMING--

--WITH *YOU*, STEVE. I *WISH* WE COULD BE TOGETHER LIKE THIS *ALWAYS*.

THAT MAKES APPROXIMATELY *TWO* OF US, HONEY.

I'M SO HAPPY WE COULD TAKE THIS VACATION, DARLING.

THE ONLY *WORRY* I'VE GOT ANYMORE IS BEING A *BLONDE*!

WHY, SHARON?

'CAUSE I'M SO *FAIR-SKINNED*, THE SUN'S MAKING ME LOOK LIKE A *LOBSTER*!

*SO YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING WHERE **OUR** CAPTAIN AMERICA IS, HUH? WONDER NO **LONGER**, BECAUSE WE SHIFT OUR SCENE FAR TO THE **SOUTH**--TO THE PICTURE-POSTCARD BEAUTY OF THE **CARRIBEAN**...*

AND *YOU*, PALEFACE--I NOTICE A LITTLE PEELING ON *YOUR* BOD, TOO!

THEN GET WITH A *REAL* MAN, SWEET-STUFF!

I'M THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN *LOOKING* FOR, WHILE YOU'VE BEEN FILLING YOUR *TIME* WITH *MR. CLEAN* THERE.

MY NAME'S, *ARNOLD*--!

HEY!

AND MINE'S *SHARON!*

I'M *NOT* PLEASED TO MEET YOU!

YOU DUMB *JOCK!* YOU'VE BEEN READING TOO MANY *ADS* ABOUT KICKING *SAND* IN PEOPLE'S FACES!

SOME GIRLS LIKE *MORE* IN A MAN THAN JUST *DELTOIDS*, YOU KNOW!

LITTLE CHICK, I DON'T *LIKE* TO USE MY STRENGTH TO *HURT* ANYONE--

--BUT *YOU* JUST MADE ME *MAD!*

EXCUSE ME, HONEY--BUT *THIS* TIME IT'S *MY* DANCE!

ALLEZ--

OOP!!

MAYBE... MAYBE WE CAN'T *EVER* BE FREE OF VIOLENCE, STEVE--!

DON'T *SAY* IT, SHARON!

IF WE *HAVE* TO, WE'LL FIND A *PRIVATE* BEACH.

JUST IN CASE ANYBODY SUSPECTED THE CAPTAIN AMERICA IN NEW YORK WAS GENUINE, THAT OUGHT TO SETTLE THE MATTER. BUT IT JUST RETURNS US TO OUR OPENING ENIGMA: WHO IS HE?

TALK, RAT! WHERE'S THAT OTHER CAP?

FRAGILE

ASK ME TILL YOUR TEETH FALL OUT, MISTER--

--I'M NOT TALKIN'!

YOU MAY LOOK AND SOUND LIKE CAP, BUT YOU'RE JUST--

HIT 'IM, CAP! MAKE HIM KNOW WE'RE REAL!

FALCON, I AM CAPTAIN AMERICA!

YOUR FRIEND IS SOME PINKO WHO'S DUPED THE AMERICAN PUBLIC--WHO'S TRYING TO SELL OUT THIS GREAT NATION TO THE REDS!

I AM THE TRUE FORCE OF OUR DEMOCRACY--

--AND YOU'LL SOON ADMIT IT--OR I'LL BEAT YOUR BRAINS OUT!

--BUT IF I CAN JUST BREAK THESE OLD ROPES--!

HE'S A MANIAC--

OUTSIDE, THE CRIMSON SUN PREPARES TO REST, TO GRAB A BIT OF ITS HEAT AND DROP BELOW THE WESTERN HORIZON. BUT IN ITS LAST SCARLET MOMENTS, IT CAN STILL CAST LONG, MENACING SHADOWS ON TYLER'S WARE-HOUSE...

DELIVERIES

THIS IS THE PLACE, BROTHERS.

JODY WAS SURE RIGHT!

POUND HIM, CAP! POUND HIM TILL HE BEGS!

BEGGING WE DON'T NEED, BUCKY-- JUST INFO.

--AND THIS ONE WOULDN'T BEG, ANYWAY.

BUT YOUR HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE!

FALCON, YOU SHOULD CHANGE YOUR NAME TO POSSUM--

--'CAUSE I THINK THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE PLAYING.

BUT WE'LL SEE IF I CAN GET A RISE OUT OF YOU!

WAIT, CAP-- THERE'S SOMEBODY AT THE DOOR!

KNOCK KNOCK

AGILE

I'LL CAN THE MASK AND TAKE A PEEK.

WHO'S THERE?

BUILDING INSPECTOR.

BUILDING INSPECTOR? I DON'T--

HOLY COW!

CAP!

WATCH OUT! IT'S A MOB!

WE WANT THE FALCON, KID!

SKREEEE

GET 'EM, BROTHERS!

THEY CAN'T MESS WITH BLOOD!

BUCKY! GOOD LORD, BUCKY--I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

I KNOW, CAP! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT EITHER!

BUT I'LL HOLD 'EM OFF!

I'M JUST AS STRONG AS YOU--

--AND THESE GUYS ARE FINDING IT OUT!

MAYBE, BABY--!

BUT WE GOT THE NUMBERS, MAN--

--AND YOU CAN'T TAKE US ALL FOREVER!

FUNT!

RIGHT ON, BRO'!

SHOOT! HIS STRENGTH'S SOMETHIN' ELSE--

--BUT HE SURELY AIN'T INVULNER-ABLE!

THE BLUE-AND-RED FORM BEGINS TO COLLAPSE, TO GRAB ITS LUCID WEARINESS AND DROP TO THE COOL, GRAY CONCRETE. BUT IN BUCKY'S LAST MOMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, HIS EYES CRACKLE BRIGHT WITH THE STOKED FIRES OF MADNESS.

HE'S OUT, JACK! LET'S GET THE OTHER ONE!

SURE, BUT DID YOU SEE... HOW HE HATED US...?

FORGET IT! SAVE THE FALCON!

BUT THE PATH TO THE FALCON... IS PAVED WITH FALLEN FRIENDS!

I STOPPED THIS BUNCH--

KLUMP!

TH UD!

--BUT THERE ARE MORE!

GET 'IM!

TRASH HIM, YOU DUDES!

TOO MANY OF THEM--

--AND THIS ISN'T GETTING ME THE INFO I WANT!

GOT TO RUN FOR IT--

--BUT I'LL TAKE MY PIGEON ALONG!

WHAM!

SAY BYE-BYE TO YOUR FRIENDS, SCUM!

JUST A FEW SECONDS MORE WITH THESE ROPES--!

THE MAN'S A COWARD, RAFE!

NO LIE, WYATT! HE'S RUNNIN' LIKE A LICKED DOG!

COWARD? NOBODY CALLS ME THAT, IF THEY WANT TO STAY HEALTHY!

KEEP TALKIN'--

--'CAUSE I CAN FEEL THIS HEMP STARTIN' TO *BREAK* AT LAST!

WAIT! I FINALLY SAW IT!

I KNOW WHO THAT DUDE REALLY *IS!*

HOW ABOUT *YOU*, MYSTERY BUFF? HAVE *YOU* SPOTTED THE SAME CLUE THE *FALCON* HAS?

I KNOW WHO HE *IS*--

--AND I CAN *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

THERE'S A *LOT* I DON'T *UNDERSTAND*--BUT THAT CAN *WAIT!*

HEADS UP, MISTER!

THIS IS THE *FOURTH QUARTER*--

--AND YOU'RE *TACKLED!*

YOU *FOOL!* WE'RE GOING THROUGH THE *RAILING!*

KRAAKK!

WE'LL HIT THE *FLOORRRRGHHH*

BOOM

IN AN *INSTANT* THE FORCES OF CONFLICT ARE BENT AND *THWARTED*. THE ATTACKERS FIND THEIR ENEMY *BEHIND* THEM--AND THE ENEMY FINDS FREEDOM *BEFORE* HIM.

THANKS FOR THE *CUSHION*, RAT.

I'LL SEE YOU *LATER*.

WHAT IS THIS MAN CALLING HIMSELF CAPTAIN AMERICA?

HE IS A MAN DEMONSTABLY *INSANE*, A MAN WHO ENJOYS *TORTURE*, A MAN WHO *HATES*--AND YET A MAN FIERCLY *LOYAL* TO THE BOY CALLED BUCKY.

CAN'T LEAVE YOU *BEHIND*, LI'L PARTNER!

AND WHAT IS THE MAN CALLED *FALCON*? HE IS BRUISED, BATTERED, AND BARELY ABLE TO *MOVE*--

--YET MOVE HE *DOES*--

--THE BEST HE *CAN*!

FOR SCREAMING MUSCLES *REFUSE* TO FOLLOW THEIR MASTER'S *WILL*...

...AND THE DESIRE TO *FOLLOW*, TO *FIGHT*...BECOMES THE PAINFUL *REALITY* OF HEAVING LUNGS SUCKING AIR INTO A THROBBING CHEST.

HE STANDS *SILENT* FOR LONG SECONDS...BEFORE HIS GREAT HEAD SLOWLY *PIVOTS*, TO LOOK AGAIN AT THOSE WHO *RESCUED* HIM.

THANKS... PEOPLE.

THERE ARE NO WORDS... BUT THANKS...

AHHH, SHOVE IT *SIDEWAYS*, HERO!

THE GREAT *FALCON*-- THE *BIG MAN* IN THE GHETTO--

--HE CAN WIN *ANY* FIGHT--AS LONG AS HE'S GOT A *BATTALION* BEHIND HIM.

CRUD!

HEY, DON'T LET HIM *BUG* YA, MAN! YOU DID THE BEST YOU *COULD!*

SURE, BRO'! Y'KNOW, WHEN YOU TOOK THAT DUDE THROUGH THE *RAILIN'*! I LIKE TO FELL DOWN *MYSELF!*

IF HE HADN'T *FALLEN* ON YOU, YOU COULD'A TAKEN HIM *EASY!*

HEY, MR. FALCON-- IF YOU NEED A *NURSE,* I'M GOOD WITH MY *HANDS.*

I THOUGHT YOU'D FIGURED ME FOR A *COWARD,* LEILA.

NOT THAT I'M *COMPLAIN-ING* ABOUT THE CHANGE-OF-HEART, MIND-- BUT RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT *NO TIME.*

HUH? WHY *NOT?*

'CAUSE I'VE GOT TO FIND THAT *PHONEY.*

--AND HE *IS* A PHONEY. HE'S *NOT* CAPTAIN AMERICA. SPREAD THE *WORD.*

PEOPLE, I'VE GOT MY *WIND* BACK NOW, SO I'VE GOT TO *GO--*

--BUT, AGAIN... *THANKS.*

ACTUALLY, I DON'T FEEL ALL THAT *SWIFT* YET--

--BUT I'LL WORK THE *KINKS* OUT SWINGIN' AROUND.

THE PROBLEM *IS:* WHERE DO I *SWING?*

MY FIGURING OUT WHO THE *IMPOSTER* IS DOESN'T TELL ME *THAT!*

THERE'S A LOT OF *HOLES* TO HIDE IN AROUND HERE, AND IT WOULDN'T BE *TOUGH* TO PULL ONE IN *AFTER* HIM.

C'MON, BROTHER BIRD. TONIGHT OUR MISSION IS *MANHUNT.*

SKREEEE!

BUT...

--TWO HOURS DOWN, REDWING-- AND NOT EVEN A *NIBBLE.*

GUESS WE COULDN'T EXPECT HIM TO MAKE IT *EASY* FOR US.

STILL, THERE ARE *WAYS* AND THERE ARE *WAYS*...

LET'S CHECK WITH SOME *STOOLIES*, AND SEE WHAT *THEY* KNOW.

--NOTHIN', FALCON. I'D HELP YA-- YOU *KNOW* THAT-- BUT I AIN'T SEEN *NOTHIN'!!*

--NOTHING! NOT A *THING!*

--NOTHING! I'M *LEGIT* NOW! I KEEP MY NOSE *CLEAN!* REALLY!

--NOTHING!

BUT IF YOU SAY HE HAD YOU AT *TYLER'S*--I KNOW WHO *OWNS* THAT DUMP.

MORGAN.

"MORGAN." THE WORD LINGERS IN THE AIR LIKE *BAD BREATH.* MORGAN--KING OF THE HARLEM *UNDERWORLD*--A MAN THE FALCON HAS MET *BEFORE!*

HE'S NOT AT THE *DINER* THIS TIME--

BACK BY MORT

--BUT IT WASN'T *HARD* TO DIG OUT HIS *HOME* ADDRESS!

THERE, REDWING! *SLEAZY* LOOKIN' DUMP ISN'T IT?

BUT I'VE GOT ME A HUNCH THAT HE HAD A *DIFFERENT* DECORATOR *INSIDE.*

WATCH IT, QUINT! HERE COMES TROUBLE!
I GOT EYES, BILLIE.
I CALLED IT, ALL RIGHT.
MORGAN JUST WANTS TO SEEM AS POOR AS HIS NEIGHBORS--
--BUT HE PAYS FOR A GOOD PAD--
--AND TWO LOUSY GUARDS!
THAT'S TWICE YOU DONE BILLIE IN, BUDDY--!
LUCKY MR. MORGAN'S GOT MAN-MOUNTAIN QUINT TO--WHA--?
THIK!
IT'S CALLED "DUCKING," QUINT.
NOW TAKE A "GANDER" AT THIS!
POW!
QUINT!
GRAB YOUR HEAT, BIM-- IT'S THE SCARLOTTI MOB!
UH UH, FAT MAN-- YOUR GANG-WAR BUDDIES STAYED HOME TONIGHT!
IT'S ONLY ME--AND I WANT NOTHIN' BUT STRAIGHT, FAST ANSWERS FROM YOU, MORGAN!
WHO RENTED TYLER'S WAREHOUSE FROM YOU TODAY?
TAKE IT SLOW, FALCON. EVERYTHING'S COOL.
I RUN A SMOOTH OPERATION--TROUBLE WITH YOU ISN'T GOOD BUSINESS.
SO IT'S SIMPLE: WE'LL BE FRIENDS.

I GOT *CASH* IN THE *MAIL* TO LEAVE TYLER'S UN-LOCKED TODAY.

I DON'T KNOW *WHO* SENT IT-- AND FOR A *PROFIT*, I DON'T *CARE*.

KNOW SOMETHIN', MORGAN? I *BELIEVE* YOU-- 'CAUSE IT *SOUNDS* LIKE YOU.

MONEY MAKES IT ALL *FINE*. BUSINESS IS *BUSINESS*.

WELL, *SOMEDAY* WE'LL TANGLE *HEAD-ON*...

...AND I'LL *SQUASH* YOU LIKE THE PARA-SITE YOU *ARE*!

ADD *THIS* UP, FATS: WE *WON'T* BE FRIENDS!

CRIME! A FEW LIVE *RICH* BY PROMOTING IT--AND OTHERS LIVE *POOR* BY FIGHTING IT.

MRS. MULDOON? HI-- I'M BOB COURTNEY--.

FROM THE *FORCE*? OH, PLEASE *COME IN*!

DEAR, PATROLMAN *COURTNEY* IS HERE TO SEE YOU.

DEAR--?

I-I'M *SORRY*.. BUT MY HUSBAND IS A LITTLE *TIRED*...

I UNDER-STAND, MA'AM.

SARGE? *HEY*, NOW--

I THINK I'VE GOT SOMETHING YOU LIKE TO *HEAR*.

WHAT? OH, HELLO, COURTNEY.

WHAT'S THAT YOU SAID?

SARGE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT *MEANS*--

BUT MY PARTNER, *ROGERS**, DESERTED ME THE NIGHT YOU WERE...AH... SUSPENDED--

--AND THEN HE CALLED IN *SICK*. HE'S *DISAPPEARED*, SARGE.

THE DAY I *LEFT*, HUH?

BY HEAVEN! SOMETHING *SOLID* I CAN FIGHT, AT *LAST*!

IF ROGERS WAS INVOLVED IN *FRAMING* ME--

--I'LL FIND OUT *EVERY* SECRET HE'S *GOT*!

*ROGERS IS, OF COURSE, CAP'S SECRET IDENTITY. -- ROY

SO NOW ALL THE PLAYERS STAND *POISED* UPON THIS STAGE WE CALL A *WORLD*--AS WE HURTLE *HEADLONG* TOWARD A FEARFUL *CLIMAX!*

NOBODY'S SEEN THE IMPOSTER. EVEN *MORGAN* WAS A DUD.

I'VE GOT TO CALL *CAP* IN ON THIS--

--'CAUSE IF I'M *RIGHT* IN THINKING I KNOW THE FRAUD'S *IDENTITY*, CAP'LL WANT TO *HELP*.

THEN, OVER THE REEPS AND DINGS OF THE LONG-DISTANCE CONNECTION...

WHAT?

I'M AFRAID MR. ROGERS AND MISS CARTER LEFT FOR *MOSCA CAY*--"TO *LOSE* THEMSELVES," THEY SAID.

THEY *CANNOT* BE CONTACTED.

OF ITS OWN ACCORD, THE FALCON'S *HAND* DROPS THE COLD, PLASTIC RECEIVER BACK ON ITS *HOOK*.

THEN...I'LL HAVE TO FLY *DOWN* THERE AND GET HIM *MYSELF*.

HE'S *GOT* TO KNOW!

BUT *SOMEBODY'LL* HAVE TO BE ON THE *LOOKOUT* FOR THAT PHONEY *HERE* WHILE I'M GONE.

SHIELD?

NO, I DON'T WANT *FURY* IN THIS. HE'S STILL GETTING HIS *HEAD* STRAIGHT.

THE *VIBES* AREN'T GOOD RIGHT NOW.

SO *THAT* MAKES IT--

-- *THE AVENGERS!*

HOUSES AND HOUSES. WE'VE SEEN *MORGAN'S* GHETTO PALACE--NOW THERE'S *TONY STARK'S* BROWNSTONE: *AVENGERS* H.Q....

LIGHTS ARE STILL ON, REDWING.

SOMEBODY'S HOME.

GOOD EVENING, MASTER FALCON. COULD I SEE YOUR *IDENTIFICATION*, PLEASE?

I *MUST* CHECK ALL NON-AVENGERS CLOSELY. YOU *UNDERSTAND*, I'M SURE.

NO *PROBLEM*, JARVIS.

WHY, *FALCON!* IT'S GOOD TO *SEE* YOU AGAIN!

SOMETHING *UP,* BUDDY?

I *HOPE* NOT. THEY'RE JUST STARTING TO *RERUN* "LAST OF THE MOHICANS"--

--AND I REALLY *DIG* THAT *OTHER* HAWKEYE.

LISTEN, I'VE GOT A *FAVOR* TO ASK.

THERE'S A FAKE *CAPTAIN AMERICA* LOOSE--

--AND I HAVE TO GET TO *MOSCA CAY,* IN THE BAHAMAS, TO WARN *OUR* CAP.

THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING *BIG*-- FOR ME AND FOR *CAP.*

WILL YOU KEEP AN *EYE* OUT FOR THIS GUY?

C'MON, FALC--YOU DON'T HAVE TO *ASK.*

IF WE RUN INTO A *BAD-TYPE* CAPTAIN AMERICA, WE'LL PUT THE *ARM* ON 'IM FOR YA!

A BAD CAPTAIN AMERICA?

BUT TEN MINUTES AGO, CAPTAIN AMERICA *RELIEVED* ME AT THE VIDEO MONITOR DOWNSTAIRS.

CAP *RELIEVED*--

OH, *NO!* IT'S *HIM!*

IT'S THE *FAKE!*

IT *MUST* BE.

MOVE IT, AVENGERS!

DOWN THE CARPETED STAIRS **FLASH** SIX COLORFUL FIGURES! DIGGING FOR **TRACTION** ON HIGHLY POLISHED FLOORS, **SKIDDING** AROUND CORNERS, THEY SOON REACH THE GIANT **VIDEO TRANSCEIVER**, WHICH CAN VIEW BOTH TIMES SQUARE AND TIMBUKTU WITH **EQUAL** FACILITY--

--BUT THEY DON'T REACH IT **SOON ENOUGH!**

THERE'S NO ONE HERE **NOW!**

NO-- BUT-- **LOOK--!**

HE WAS WATCHING THE **LIVING ROOM**-- THE ROOM **WE** WERE IN--

--AND HE MUST HAVE HEARD ME SAY WHERE **CAP** WAS!

WHAT **OTHER** WAYS ARE THERE OUT OF HERE?

WE **CAN'T** LET HIM GET **AWAY!**

TO YOUR **LEFT, FALCON.**

BUT THE **QUARRY** IS FLEET OF FOOT...

JARVIS, DID YOU ASK FOR **IDENTIFICATION** WHEN CAP ARRIVED?

UH ... NO, SIR. HE'S BEEN AN AVENGER **SO LONG...**

NO **SIGN** OF HIM.

ALL MY **EFFORTS**-- ALL MY **WORK**--DOWN THE TUBE THROUGH **ONE SIMPLE MISTAKE--!**

WE APOLOGIZE...

YOU DIDN'T **KNOW,** FELLA.

BUT NOW IT'S A **RACE**-- A RACE TO **MOSCA CAY--**

--AND IF I **LOSE--CAP DIES!**

NEXT:
THE **REAL** CAP SWINGS BACK INTO **ACTION**--AND THE **FAKE** FINALLY REVEALS HIS INCREDIBLE **ORIGIN!** BE HERE!

CAPT. AMERICA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON™

NEVER SEEN BEFORE!

THE SECRET ORIGIN OF CAPTAIN AMERICA!

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

THE INCREDIBLE ORIGIN OF THE OTHER CAPTAIN AMERICA!

FOR THOSE WHO CAME IN LATE: BOO ON YOU!

AND NOW THAT THAT'S OUT OF THE WAY: STEVE (CAPTAIN AMERICA) ROGERS AND SHARON CARTER HAVE TAKEN A VACATION ON A REMOTE BAHAMAS BEACH, CUTTING THEMSELVES OFF FROM ALL COMMUNICATION.

NOW THEY ARE REVELING IN A PEACE THEY'VE SELDOM KNOWN-- UNAWARE THAT TWO MADMEN CALLING THEMSELVES CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY HAVE SWORN TO KILL THEM-- AND THE NET IS CLOSING FAST!

STAN LEE PRESENTS A CONTEMPORARY COMICS CLASSIC BY:
STEVE ENGLEHART, SCRIPTER
SAL BUSCEMA, ARTIST
FRANK McLAUGHLIN, INKER
JEAN IZZO, LETTERER
ROY THOMAS, EDITOR
WITH A SPECIAL TIP OF THE WINGED COWL TO JOHNNY ROMITA

10237

--AND THE *WINNER* IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES *GIRL-TOSS* EVENT IS-- *STEVE ROGERS!*

YOU KNOW, HONEY-- WHEN I *USED* TO RUN THROUGH THIS *SHIELD* PRACTICE ROUTINE WITH *COL. FURY--*

--IT JUST *NEVER* SEEMED TO HAVE AS MUCH *GOING* FOR IT.

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD TAKE UP *CIGARS,* TO PUT ME IN THE *MOOD?*

I THINK YOU'RE IN THE MOOD *RIGHT NOW,* DARLING.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A COOLING *SWIM* IN THE *SURF?*

OKAY, SHARON-- AND THEN *INSIDE,* OR MY SUNBURN'LL START *SMOKING.*

WE'LL *SEE,* STEVE--

-- BUT RIGHT *NOW,* LAST ONE TO THE *BREAKERS* IS A *HYDRA AGENT!*

NOT A *CHANCE--*

--'CAUSE BULKY GREEN *JUMP SUITS* AREN'T *MADE* FOR--

NO!

IT CAN'T *BE!*

HONEY, WHAT *IS* IT? WHAT'S *WRONG?*

THAT *BOY!* HE *LOOKED* LIKE-- LOOKED LIKE---

WAIT *HERE,* SHARON! I'VE GOT TO *INVESTIGATE* THIS!

THE FLEEING YOUTHFUL FIGURE IS **FAST**, BUT **CAPTAIN AMERICA** IS FASTER. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM IS **QUICKLY** CUT IN **HALF!**

HE'S DUCKING INTO THOSE **PALMS!**

I KNOW IT **CAN'T** BE HE-- I **KNOW** IT! I'M **OVER** BELIEVING HE'LL EVER RETURN--

--BUT AS GOD IS MY **WITNESS**, THAT LOOKED LIKE **BUCKY!**

I **HAVE** TO CHECK IT OUT!

IT'S PROBABLY JUST SOME **NATIVE** KID-- OR A **TOURIST.**

BUCKY LOOKED LIKE A **LOT** OF BOYS--AND I DIDN'T GET **THAT** GOOD A **GLIMPSE** OF HIM.

ONE CLOSE **LOOK** AT HIS **FACE**, AND I'M **SURE** I'LL SEE IT ISN'T---

HA-M!

CAPTAIN AMERICA GOES DOWN LIKE A CAST-IRON SAFE, AND THERE IS SCARCELY A SOUND IN THE HOT DRY SAND!

AT **LAST!** AFTER **ALL** OUR EFFORT, WE FINALLY **GOT HIM!**

YEAH, PARTNER! I **KNEW** MY FACE WOULD SUCK HIM IN, THE **FOOL!**

CAPTAIN AMERICA IS **BEATEN** BY **CAPTAIN AMERICA!**

NOW ALL WE NEED IS THE GIRL, AND THAT'S A SNAP!

SINCE MY FACE IS THE SAME AS HIS, I'LL JUST CHANGE CLOTHES WITH HIM!

SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO TELL US APART-- TILL IT'S TOO LATE!

HEY, COME HERE! LOOK WHAT I FOUND!

WHAT'S UP, STEVE? DID YOU CATCH THAT BOY?

THIS IS TOO EASY! WHAT A STUPID BROAD!

THEN HER EYES WIDEN, AND ALARMS BEGIN TO CLANG IN HER BRAIN.

HER MAN WAS SUNBURNED, AND THIS MAN IS NOT!

DESPITE ALL THE OTHER EVIDENCE, THIS NOT STEVE ROGERS!

TO A TRAINED SHIELD AGENT, THE THOUGHT IS EQUAL TO THE ACTION. NOT KNOWING THE EXTENT OF HER OPPOSITION, SHARON CARTER SPINS ON HER HEEL WITHOUT LOSING A STRIDE-- AND RUNS!

SHE'S WISE! LET'S GET HER, BUCKY!

RIGHT WITH YA, CAP!

CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK -- SHARON'S DAINTY FEET BEAT STEADILY AGAINST THE BURNING SAND, CHURNING OUT YARD AFTER YARD OF SAFETY UNDER AN UNCARING TROPICAL SUN!

BEHIND HER COME A TERRIBLE DUO! CALL THEM DEATH AND DESTRUCTION -- CALL THEM HATE AND INSANITY -- CALL THEM WHAT YOU WILL -- BUT TRY NOT TO NOTICE THE STEADY WAY THEY ARE GAINING ON HER!

SHARON CARTER COULD OUTRUN NEARLY ANY MAN -- BUT THIS IS NOT ANY MAN! THIS IS A BUNDLE OF SUPERHUMAN MADNESS, SPURRED BY HIS PRIVATE DEVILS -- AND DETERMINED TO MURDER ALL WHO DENY HIM THE TITLE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST HERO!

HE IS UNSTOPPABLE--

--UNLESS THE UNEXPECTED INTERVENES!!

AARRGHH!

FALCON!

SORRY TO BE LATE TO YOUR *TRACK MEET,* SHARON--

--BUT IT SEEMS I PICKED THE *WRONG SIDE* OF THE ISLAND TO START *LOOKING* FOR YOU--

--AND THEY *DIDN'T!*

FALC--THEY'VE GOT *STEVE!*

YOU *BUMS--!*

IF YOU'VE PUT THE *HURT* ON 'IM, YOU'LL GET IT BACK *TWICE* FROM ME!

BUNCH!

WHO'S GONNA *GIVE* IT TO US, BLACKIE?

SOME DIVISION OF THE *RUSSIAN ARMY,* MAYBE?

MAN, I'VE *HAD* IT WITH YOUR *MOUTH!*

RED-WING!

SKREE

THAT *BIRD!* THAT LOUSY, *LOUSY* BIRD

COME *DOWN* HERE, YOU BUZZARD, AND I'LL WRING YOUR SCRAWNY *NECK!*

HOLD IT, PARTNER! REMEMBER WHAT WE'RE *HERE* FOR!

OKAY, FALC--THEY WANT A *FIGHT,* THEY'LL *GET* IT FROM *US!*

JUST GUARD MY *BACK* AND I'LL TAKE *YOURS!*

YOU *CALLED* IT, MAMA!

UHHHHHH!

LISTEN, BOY--

--WE TOOK *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*

WE CAN TAKE A *DARKIE* AND A *FRAIL!*

DREAM *ON*, YOU PENNY-ANTE HITLER!

HITLER?!? I STAND FOR *AMERICA*, THE EXACT *OPPOSITE* OF HITLER!

HE DOESN'T SOUND ANY DIFFERENT TO *ME*, FALC--

--NOT WITH ALL THAT *HATE* SPEWING OUT OF HIS MOUTH!

THAK!

C'MON, BAD GUY-- LET'S SEE THAT *LEFT HOOK*...

YOU *CRETIN!* I *KNEW* YOU'D DUCK IT-- BUT I WASN'T *AIMING* AT YOU!

I WAS TRYING FOR *HER* ALL THE *TIME!*

PUM

SHARON! MOTHER OF--

I TOLD YOU *BEFORE*:--

--YOU'VE GOTTA KEEP YOUR *MIND* ON YOUR *WORK*--

--OR YOU'RE LIABLE TO GET *HURT!*

CRUDGE!

THAT'S *IT!* THAT'S *ALL* OF 'EM!

CALL *ME* A HITLER, WILL HE?

HIS KIND *NEVER* HAS ANY BRAINS, PARTNER. HE WOULDN'T KNOW AMERICA'S *SAVIOR* IF HE RAN *INTO* HIM--

--WHICH HE SORT OF *DID.*

PATCHES OF **BLACK**, INTERSPERSED WITH ROILING **GRAY**: THE PERCEPTIONS OF OUR UNCONSCIOUS HEROES--

--UNTIL THE THRUMMING OF DEEP **MOTORS** GRADUALLY SWELLS THEM INTO **WAKEFULNESS.**

WELCOME, SCUM. WELCOME BACK TO AWARENESS.

NOW THAT I HAVE YOU ALL **TOGETHER**, IT'S **TIME** TO TELL YOU THE **REASON** FOR ALL THIS.

I WANT YOU TO **KNOW** WHO I AM, AND HOW I **BECAME** THIS WAY-- BEFORE I **KILL** YOU.

SINCE **THAT**, AFTER ALL, IS WHAT I **MUST DO.**

FOR YOU **SEE**, I AM THE **CAPTAIN AMERICA OF THE 1950'S!**

I AM THE **OTHER** CAPTAIN AMERICA!

"I SEE YOU'RE **SHOCKED.** THEN LISTEN: I WAS **11** WHEN CAP FIRST APPEARED IN 1941. LIKE **ALL** AMERICANS, I **WORSHIPED** HIM. I JOINED HIS **FAN CLUB.** I READ EVERY **WORD** PRINTED ABOUT HIM.

"AND THEN, IN 1945, I SAW WORDS I WOULD HAVE GONE **BLIND** BEFORE READING--

DAILY BUGLE

CAPTAIN AMERICA DISAPPEARS!

BUCKY DIES IN FLAMING EXPLOSION

NO TRACE OF CAP'S BODY IN WRECKAGE

"--WORDS THAT **CHANGED MY LIFE!**

"THE WORLD SLOWLY, **SADLY**, WENT BACK TO BUSINESS AS **USUAL**-- BUT NOT **ME**. I DECIDED TO MAKE MY **LIFE'S WORK** THE STUDY OF **CAP**, THE WAY **SOME** PEOPLE STUDY **LINCOLN** OR **JESUS**. IT BECAME AN **OBSESSION**--

"--UNTIL FINALLY, IN 1952, I GRADUATED **SUMMA CUM LAUDE** IN AMERICAN HISTORY, HAVING DONE MY **THESIS** ON HIM."

"BUT THAT WASN'T **ENOUGH!** I KNEW ALL **ABOUT** HIM FROM THE **ALLIED** POINT OF VIEW-- BUT WHAT HAD THE **NAZIS** THOUGHT? WHAT HAD THEIR **INTELLIGENCE REPORTS** SAID?

"SO, EARLY IN 1953, I GATHERED MY FUNDS AND FLEW TO **GERMANY.**

MÜNCHEN FLUGPLATZ

"ONCE THERE, I HAUNTED THE ARCHIVES, WHERE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OLD NAZI RECORDS WERE BEING STORED BY THE ALLIES. HARDLY ANY HAD BEEN LOOKED THROUGH, AND I WAS IN HEAVEN FOR WEEKS.

RUHE BITTE

"THEY HAD LOTS TO SAY ABOUT CAP, AND NONE OF IT GOOD. I LEARNED A GREAT MANY GERMAN CURSE WORDS IN THOSE REPORTS.

"AND THEN, IN MARCH, I WAS LOOKING THROUGH THE 1941 FILES OF A SUPPOSEDLY MINOR ESPIONAGE OFFICER...

GEHEIM-AKTE
von
SS MAJ. KERFO

"...WHEN I FOUND AN INCREDIBLE REPORT!

OH MY LORD!

THIS--THIS IS A FORMULA--FOR THE AMERICAN SUPER-SOLDIER!

"I SCANNED THE FILE, UNBELIEVING. IT TOLD OF RUMORS ABOUT AN AMERICAN EXPERIMENT TO PRODUCE ULTRA-WARRIORS. ONE OF KERFOOT'S SPIES HAD BEEN ORDERED TO INVESTIGATE, AND HAD STOLEN THIS FORMULA, JUST HOURS BEFORE BEING UNCOVERED AND KILLED DURING THE EXPERIMENT ITSELF.

"THAT WAS THE LAST REPORT BY KERFOOT--AND CROSS-CHECKING SHOWED WHY. HE HAD DIED IN A BOMB BLAST THE NEXT DAY.

KA-BOOM

BUT...BUT THE SUPER-SOLDIER EXPERIMENT... WAS THE ONE THAT PRODUCED CAP!

THEN, WITH THIS FORMULA... I CAN BECOME A NEW CAPTAIN AMERICA!

"I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT I FLEW DIRECTLY TO WASHINGTON.

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, SIR.

YOU HAVE THE SUPER-SOLDIER FORMULA--EVEN THOUGH ITS CREATOR DIED WITHOUT DIVULGING IT.

MAYBE HE NEVER TOLD ANYONE, BUT HE WROTE IT DOWN--

--BECAUSE THE NAZIS STOLE IT, AND THEN LOST IT THEMSELVES.

MY BOY, YOU'VE DONE YOUR COUNTRY A GREAT SERVICE.

WITH THE KOREAN WAR GOING ON, WE CAN CERTAINLY USE--

OH NO! THE SECRET IS MINE--MINE ALONE!

IF THERE'S GOING TO BE A NEW CAPTAIN AMERICA, IT'LL BE ME.

"THEY WERE ANGRY, OF COURSE, AND DEMANDED A TEST, SO I MADE UP A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE SERUM FOR THEM TO TEST...

"THEY WERE CONVINCED.

250 LBS.

"I KNEW THEY'D THEN TRY TO ROOK ME, BY ANALYZING THE MONKEY'S BLOOD--BUT THE SERUM WAS UNDETECTABLE--

"--JUST LIKE WITH THE REAL CAP.

"AND SO... WE'VE RUN A TOTAL CHECK ON HIM, SIR, AND HE'S COMPLETELY CLEAN. NO SECURITY PROBLEMS AT ALL.

THEN IT'S SETTLED, I GUESS.

MY BOY, YOUR COUNTRY STANDS BEHIND YOU!

YOU WILL BE--AMERICA'S SAVIOR!

"BEFORE I **INJECTED** MYSELF WITH MY **SERUM**, THERE WERE STILL THINGS TO **DO**.

"I WANTED AMERICA TO BELIEVE I WAS THE **SAME** CAP AS **BEFORE**, TO THINK HE'D NEVER **DIED**-- SO I HAD TO SEARCH THEIR FILES FOR **PHOTOS**, RECORDINGS OF HIS **VOICE**, AND THE **SECRET** OF HIS **IDENTITY**.

"I UNDERWENT **PLASTIC SURGERY**, AND OPERATIONS TO HAVE MY VOCAL CORDS **REBUILT**.

"FOR TWO WEEKS, I WAITED BEHIND A GAUZE **VEIL**--

"--AND THEN--

"--I TRULY BECAME... MY LIFETIME IDOL!

"AT LAST I WAS READY FOR THE **FINAL** STEP--

"-- BUT, AS IF IN SOME BIZARRE **JOKE**... THE NEXT DAY WAS JULY 27, 1953!

— Clarion —

TRUCE IN KOREA!

"THE **WAR** HAD ENDED.

MY BOY, SINCE OUR TROOPS FOUGHT THIS WAR FOR THE **UNITED NATIONS**, WE **DARE** NOT UNLEASH A SYMBOL OF **NATIONAL** INTEREST AT THIS TIME--

--SO PLANS FOR YOU ARE **CANCELLED!**

WHAT?!? BUT YOU **CAN'T**--

THIS DISCUSSION IS **CLOSED**.

"IT WAS A BITTER PILL TO SWALLOW-- BUT MY GOVERNMENT WAS MY GOVERNMENT. SO I RELUCTANTLY TOOK MY HISTORY DEGREE AND GOT A PROFESSORSHIP AT A SMALL CONNECTICUT ACADEMY...

"...THE LEE SCHOOL!

"MEMORIES MADE ME KEEP MY NEW NAME OF STEVE ROGERS-- MEMORIES I TRIED TO BURY UNDER THE WEIGHT OF TEXTBOOKS...TO NO AVAIL.

"BECAUSE THAT FALL, AS I WAS STROLLING-- ALONE, AS USUAL-- I CAME UPON ONE OF THE YOUNGER STUDENTS READING SOMETHING THAT CAUGHT MY EYE...

THE LIFE STORY OF CAPTAIN AMERICA

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, SON?

OH-- OH, HI, SIR. THIS IS A MAGAZINE ABOUT MY IDOLS, CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY.

YOU REMEMBER-- THE GUYS IN THE WORLD WAR?

THE LIFE OF CAPT AMER

YES... I REMEMBER...

I GRAB UP EVERYTHING I CAN FIND ON THEM.

AND... IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO LAUGH... WELL, I EVEN CALL MYSELF BUCKY.

BUCKY, HUH?

HE EVEN LOOKS LIKE BUCKY!

"AND SUDDENLY IT WAS ALL SPILLING OUT OF ME, AS IF THE LOGJAM OF DUTY AND SENSE HAD BURST BEFORE THE PRESS OF MY MEMORIES.

"I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH DELIGHT IN A BOY'S EYES.

"WE KEPT IT AS OUR SECRET, AND OFTEN TALKED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

"BUT I GUESS TALKING WASN'T ENOUGH FOR BUCKY.

STEVE--? I MADE THIS FOR YOU--

DO YOU THINK, MAYBE... YOU WOULD *WANT* TO...Y'KNOW, JUST... *WEAR* IT?

OH *LORD*, BUCKY... THERE'S *NOTHING* I WANT MORE.

THE THOUGHT OF HELPING *AMERICANS*-- OF HELPING *ALL* FREEDOM-LOVING PEOPLE-- OF DOING MY SMALL *PART* TO SAVE THIS CRAZY *PLANET*--

--AND, AT THE *SAME* TIME, GIVING THE WORLD A SYMBOL OF *PEACE* AND *BROTHERHOOD* -- SOMETHING TO *CLING* TO--

OH *YES*, I WANT TO...

...BUT I *CAN'T*. WASHINGTON SAID *NO*, AND I MUST *LIVE* WITH IT.

THE REDS HAVE BEEN *QUIET* SINCE THE TRUCE--AND AMERICA MUST *NEVER* APPEAR TO *PROVOKE* THEM.

O-OKAY... CAP...

*"THAT WAS THAT THEN-- UNTIL A FATEFUL DAY LATER THAT YEAR---**

I USED TO HEAR MY FATHER TALK ABOUT A CAPTAIN AMERICA... MY OLDER BROTHER, TOO! *I* CAN'T FALL FOR IT THOUGH!

YEAH... AND IF HE EVER *DID* EXIST, HE MUST BE AN OLD FOGY BY NOW! WHAT GOOD WOULD HE BE?

YOU GUYS TAKE THAT BACK!

IN THE INTERESTS OF TOTAL **ACCURACY, WE **NOW** PRESENT PAGES FROM **YOUNG MEN COMICS** #24 DEC. 1953 -- ROY.*

WHAT?

YOU HEARD ME! TAKE BACK ALL THE THINGS YOU SAID ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA! PROFESSOR ROGERS IS TELLING THE *TRUTH!*

LISTEN, YOU... JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT THE SAME NAME AS THE SO-CALLED CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PAL BUCKY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO HIS SCRAPPIN' FOR HIM!

SCHOOL PARKING

HEY! BREAK IT UP, BOYS!

I'LL DO MY OWN SCRAPPIN'! LIKE THIS!

OOOF

HOOL RKING

HOLD IT, BOYS!
LEMME AT 'EM! I'LL...
YAH! LITTLE BUCKY THINKS HE'S A GREAT BIG HERO!
I'M GOING INTO NEW YORK TO GET SOME NEW TEXT BOOKS! YOU'D BETTER COME ALONG SO YOU CAN KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE! WHAT WAS THAT SCRAP ALL ABOUT, BUCKY?
STEVE...THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA! PROVE IT! PROVE THAT HE'S STILL ALIVE AND IS AS GOOD AS EVER!
NO, BUCKY! CAPTAIN AMERICA'S WORK IS DONE! THERE'S NO NEED FOR HIS RETURN! NOW, CHEER UP AND LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC!
FLASH! HERE'S TERRIBLE NEWS, FOLKS! THE WORST CRIMINAL MIND OF ALL HAS COME BACK TO PLAGUE HUMANITY! THIS TIME HE'S JOINED OUR RED ENEMIES TO FIGHT AGAINST AMERICA! YES... THE RED SKULL IS BACK!
THE RED SKULL!! STEVE... DO YOU HEAR?
YES... I HEAR!
RIGHT NOW HE'S PULLING THE MOST FRIGHTFUL SCHEME OF HIS NEFARIOUS CAREER! HE AND HIS GANG HAVE CRASHED THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING... AND THEY'RE HOLDING THE DELEGATES PRISONERS!
THE U.N. BUILDING! IT'S RIGHT AHEAD!
...AND THE POLICE HAVE BLOCKED OFF ALL TRAFFIC!
THE SKULL WANTS THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE U.N. TURNED OVER TO HIM AS HOSTAGE TO MAKE SURE THE REDS WIN ALL THEIR DEMANDS! IF THE POLICE ATTACK, HIS MEN WILL KILL ALL THE DELEGATES!
TIME FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA TO COME BACK, STEVE?
YOU BET IT IS!
THAT'S ALL I WANTED TO KNOW!
HERE YOU ARE, STEVE! I HAD THEM UNDER THE BACK SEAT JUST FOR A TIME LIKE THIS!
GOOD! CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER! TRAFFIC'S BLOCKED! WE'LL MAKE A CHANGE AND GET OUT!

"IT WAS ALL COMING TO A HEAD NOW! I SQUEALED A SHARP LEFT INTO AN ALLEY AND SLAMMED THE BRAKES!

EEEEE

AHA! YOU'VE GOT THE SERUM RIGHT WITH YOU!

I KNEW YOU WEREN'T AS READY TO GIVE UP AS YOU SAID!

PLEASE DON'T RIDE ME, BUCKY. I'M STILL NOT SURE I SHOULD DO THIS--

--BUT THERE'S NO TURNING BACK NOW!

LISTEN-- IF YOU WANT, I'LL GIVE YOU AN INJECTION, TOO.

--AND WE'D BOTH HAVE SUPER-STRENGTH?

I WANT, CAP!

"I PRESSED THE PLUNGER, AND BUCKY REELED BACK, DIZZY...

"THEN I TOOK THE OTHER SYRINGE-- AND HELD IT POISED, TRYING TO THINK...

"BUT I'D SAID IT MYSELF: THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK-- AND I TOOK THE SECOND INJECTION!

AAAAAHHH!

"TIME STOPPED DEAD... AND THEN BUMPED ONWARD---

THAT--THAT'S IT! YOU OKAY, PARTNER?

YOU BET CAP!

THEN-- CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY LIVE AGAIN!

"SPLIT SECONDS LATER, THE CROWD AROUND THE U.N. BUILDINGS POINTED IN AWED WONDER AS TWO COLORFUL FIGURES FROM A GLORIOUS PAST CAME TO LIFE!

IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA!

AND BUCKY!

YIPPEE! THEY'RE THE ONES THAT CAN HANDLE THE RED SKULL!

GOSH! LOOK AT 'EM GO!

I HEARD ABOUT THEM! BUT I NEVER BELIEVED THEY WERE REAL!

GO GET 'EM, BUCKY... AND CAPTAIN AMERICA!

CAP!

YEAH! I SEE 'EM, BUCKY!

YOU ARE POWERLESS IN MY GRASP! THIS MEANS VICTORY FOR ME AND MY FRIENDS IN THE KREMLIN!! EVERYONE SHALL TREMBLE BEFORE THE RED SKULL! *TURN THE SECRETARY OVER TO ME!*

NOW, CAP?

NOW!

"WE" EVER TRY IT THIS WAY BEFORE, CAP?

THERE'S ALWAYS A *FIRST* TIME!

CRASH

IT...IT'S *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*

C-CAPTAIN AMERICA?

B-B-BUT YOU SAID...YOU SAID HE WAS... *DEAD!!*

HE'S BACK FROM THE DEAD! STOP HIM! STOP HIM!

"OH, IT WAS GLORIOUS! TO BE A LIVING LEGEND-- AND FIGHT THE RED SKULL-- WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A REAL RED WHO HAD STOLEN THE NAME FROM THE NAZI VILLAIN!

"--TO BATTLE THE CLUTCHING HAND OF ALL COMMUNISM ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE--

"--IN SUCH OTHER FORMS AS THE RUSSIAN KILLER ELECTRO--*

"--AND THE CHINESE ASSASSIN, THE MAN WITH NO FACE!

"WE WERE THE CHAMPIONS OF DEMOCRACY, THE INSPIRATIONS TO MILLIONS --

*NO RELATION TO DD AND SPIDEY'S FOE. --ROY.

CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY, THE SENTINELS OF LIBERTY!

"BUT SOMEHOW WE SEEMED TO OUTGROW THE WORLD. WE BEGAN FINDING REDS WHERE OTHERS SAW NOTHING, LIKE IN HARLEM AND WATTS.

"IN FACT, WE FOUND THAT MOST PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T PURE-BLOODED AMERICANS WERE COMMIES!

"WASHINGTON SAID WE WERE LOSING TOUCH WITH REALITY-- 'SCHIZOPHRENIC PARANOIA' THEY CALLED IT.

THEY'RE GOING CRAZY, BLAST IT. THEY'RE BEATING UP ANYBODY AND EVERYBODY!

THEY'VE GOT TO BE STOPPED!

...SO WE FEEL THE VITA-RAYS USED ON THE ORIGINAL CAP MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.* WITHOUT THEM, THE SERUM IS DESTROYING YOUR MINDS!

WE WANT YOU TO TURN YOURSELVES IN FOR TREATMENT.

NUTS!

C'MON, BUCKY-- WE'RE LEAVING!

*CAP #109.--RT.

I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T LET YOU, CAP.

KRAK!

FWOOM!

THEY USED TO BE HEROES-- BUT NOW THEY'RE INSANE. I WISH...

WELL, WE HAD NO OTHER CHOICE. WE HAVE TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC.

WE'VE FOUND NO CURE FOR THEM, SIR.

BUT, USING THE NEW SCIENCE OF CRYOGENICS--A FORM OF DEEP FREEZING--

--THESE TANKS WILL KEEP THEM ALIVE IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION UNTIL WE CAN CURE THEM. THEY WILL NEVER AGE OR DIE HERE.

THANK GOD FOR THAT, AT LEAST.

OFFICIALLY WE DISAPPROVED OF THEM... BUT THEY MEANT A LOT TO AMERICA BEFORE THEY WENT BAD.

"WE LEARNED ALL THIS LATER, OF COURSE. WE DIDN'T EVEN FEEL TIME PASSING, THEN.

1966

1972

"BUT THIS SPRING, ONE OF THE MEN IN CHARGE OF OUR BODIES BECAME INCENSED AT RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS...

Washington Hera

NIXON GOES TO CHINA

TRIP TO RUSSIA UP NEXT

WHAT THE DEVIL'S HAPPENING TO THIS NATION?

SOMEBODY'S GOT TO TURN THE RED TIDE BEFORE WE'RE ALL IN COMMUNES!

DESA

WE NEED MEN WHO KNOW THE COMMIES FOR WHAT THEY ARE--

--MEN LIKE THIS CAPTAIN AMERICA!

"SUDDENLY, I FELT LIFE-- FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER 15 YEARS!

"AND, WITHIN HOURS--

WE'LL NEVER FORGET THIS, FELLA, AND WE'LL GET THOSE REDS---

RIGHT AFTER WE GET A HOME-FRONT TRAITOR: THE CAPTAIN AMERICA OF TODAY YOU TOLD US ABOUT!

"THE REST YOU KNOW."

NOW I WANT YOUR STORY. HOW'D THEY PICK YOU TO BE A CAP?

THEN HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M THE ORIGINAL CAP?

YEAH? IF I'M SO DUMB--

THEY WERE RIGHT, FRIEND-- YOU ARE CRAZY! THE WORLD THESE DAYS IS TOO COMPLEX FOR A FANATIC LIKE YOU!

HOW COME I'M PULLING THIS OFF?

MAN, YOU'RE NOT!

YOU WENT THROUGH ALL THOSE HASSLES--STUDYING, SURGERY-- TO LOOK JUST LIKE CAP--

--AND THEN YOU FORGOT TO PUT RED-AND-WHITE STRIPES ON YOUR BACK LIKE THE REAL McCOY!*

YOU'RE A LOSER, MAN.

*THAT'S THE CLUE FALC SAW LAST ISSUE. --R.

SHUT UP!

SHUT UP!

SHUT UP!

SMACK

YOU'RE AGAINST ME, LIKE ALL COMMIE SCUM!

HAVE YOUR LITTLE LAUGH-- BUT SEE IF YOU'RE STILL SMILING WHEN I KILL YOU!

NICE *TEAMWORK*, PARTNER: GETTING HIM *OUT OF HERE*

CAP--? YOU'RE *FREE?*

LIKE I WANTED.

THE *REAL* CAPTAIN AMERICA'S NO *PUSH-OVER*, FALCON.

I'VE LEARNED A *LOT* ABOUT ESCAPING FROM ROPES IN MY TIME.

STEVE, HOW *LONG* HAVE YOU BEEN LOOSE?

FROM THE *BEGINNING*, HONEY... BUT I WANTED TO *HEAR* WHAT HE HAD TO *SAY*--

--AND I DON'T THINK I'VE *EVER* BEEN AS CHILLED BY MERE *WORDS* IN MY LIFE!

TO THINK HE *IS* WHAT HE *IS* BECAUSE HE *ADMIRED* ME---

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO *DO* ABOUT HIM, THEN?

DO?

WELL, IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE HIS *FAULT* THAT HE'S SO DANGEROUS...

--BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE HIM ANY LESS *MALIGNANT.*

HE'S HAD IT ALL HIS *OWN WAY* TILL *NOW*--

--BUT NOW IT'S *OUR TURN!*

NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE *SHOWDOWN!*

NEXT:

CAP FIGHTS THE BATTLE OF HIS LIFE-- AGAINST THE MAN WHO COULD BE HIM! AND--

CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST DIE!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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CAPTAIN AMERICA™ AND THE FALCON™

ONLY *ONE* CAPTAIN AMERICA IS GOING TO *SURVIVE* THIS FIGHT---

THE *REAL* ONE!!

AND THAT'S *ME!*

WHICH ONE OF THEM *IS* THE REAL CAP? *WHICH ONE??*

EVEN I CAN'T TELL FOR SURE!

FRIENDSHIP

THIS IS IT! THE FINAL SHOWDOWN! MAYHEM OVER MIAMI!

TWO INTO ONE WON'T GO!

TWO INTO ONE WON'T GO!

WE COULDN'T *POSSIBLY* TELL YOU EVERYTHING THAT WENT ON LAST ISH IN THE SPACE WE'VE GOT *HERE*---SO IF YOU *MISSED* IT, GRAB YOUR TWIN DIMES AND RUSH RIGHT DOWN TO THAT LITTLE *NEWSSTAND* YOU KNOW THAT NEVER TAKES ITS OLD *COMICS* OFF SALE---

---AND DON'T LET IT HAPPEN *AGAIN!*

SUFFICE IT TO *SAY,* HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A *SECOND* CAPTAIN AMERICA ON THE LOOSE---

--AND HE AND HIS PARTNER, *BUCKY,* HAVE CAPTURED CAP, FALCON, AND SHARON!

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT *THEY* THINK--BUT NOW OUR HEROES HAVE *FREED* THEMSELVES---

--AND THE *SHOWDOWN'S A-COMIN'!*

STEVE ENGLEHART, *SCRIPTER*
SAL BUSCEMA, *ARTIST*
FRANK McLAUGHLIN, *INKER*

SAM ROSEN, *LETTERER* • ROY THOMAS, *EDITOR*

FRAMED AGAINST A WHITE SUN, A CARGO CLIPPER LEANS WIND-WARD---

--AND SLIDES THROUGH CLEAR AIR TOWARD THE SEA.

HOLD IT, PEOPLE. IT FEELS LIKE THIS PLANE THE IMPOSTERS COM-MANDEERED IS HEADED FOR A LANDING---

--AND THAT'S NOT THE BEST OF TIMES TO DISTURB THEM AT THEIR WORK.

WE'LL WAIT TILL WERE SAFELY DOWN.

COMIN' IN, BUCKY! CRIPES, IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!

YOU SAID IT, CAP. THIS WHOLE BUSINESS HAS BEEN BAD NEWS--

--HAVIN' TO CHASE ALL THE WAY TO THE BAHAMAS TO CATCH THOSE CREEPS.

IT'LL FEEL GREAT BEIN' BACK ON U.S. OF A. SOIL--

AND, OF COURSE, IT'S THE RIGHT SPOT TO WIND UP THIS BIT BETWEEN YOU AND THAT IMPOSTOR.

THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT 'EM HERE, LI'L PARTNER.

THE CLOSEST BIG CITY I COULD GET TO.

MIAMI BEACH.

AND SO ARE WE, MISTER!

WHAT THE--?

YOU'RE LOOSE! HOW CAN YOU BE LOOSE?

THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA'S NO AMATEUR, FRIEND!

CLONG!

THIS ONE'S GOT SUPER-STRENGTH TOO, FALC!

LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND!

MAMA, YOU GIVE CAP A HAND. THIS DUDE STOPPED ME ONCE, BUT HE WON'T DO IT TWICE!

YOU JUST *WON'T* PLAY IT THE WAY I *WANT*, WILL YOU?

I'VE *NEVER* USED A GUN BEFORE -- NEVER *HAD* TO -- BUT YOU'VE *FORCED* ME!

SHOOM!

-- AND WHEN I *DO* SOMETHING, I DO IT *RIGHT!*

THE *ATOM-BLASTER!*

YOU CAN'T *AIM* THAT THING WITH THE PLANE *ROCKING* ON THE WAVES!

YOU'VE ONLY BLOWN A HOLE IN THE COCKPIT *WALL!*

BLEM!

MAYBE *SO* -- BUT IT'S A *USEFUL* HOLE!

LET'S GET US SOME ROOM TO *FIGHT*, BUCKY!

RIGHT *WITH* YA, PARTNER!

RIPP

OH *NO*, JACK!

YOUR *SHIELD* BUCKLES -- YOUR *UNIFORM* TEARS ---

-- YOU REALLY *ARE* A POOR-MAN'S VERSION OF ME, AREN'T YOU?

YOU CAN'T SAY THAT TO *ME!* I'M AMERICA'S *SAVIOR!*

BUTTON IT! I'M *SICK* OF YOUR RAVINGS!

NOW IT'S *MAN-TO-MAN!*

THERE IS NO HONOR AMONG *MADMEN*, OF COURSE--- AND BUCKY WOULD *JOIN* THE FIGHT--

--*IF* HE COULD FIND HIS *BALANCE* ON THE SEE-SAWING WING.

THEN, ACROSS THE WATER SKIPS THE RAUCOUS BLAST OF A *LOUDSPEAKER*...

AHOY THE *PLANE!* THIS IS THE *COAST GUARD!*

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U.S. COAST GUARD

CEASE ALL ACTIVITIES UNTIL WE *JOIN* YOU!

BUT WORDS CANNOT STOP *ACTION*, WHEN NEITHER MAN WILL *YIELD*...

SHP!

AND TRAGEDY IS THE STARK *RESULT!*

BARSOOM!

SHIFTED MY SHIELD TO MY OTHER *HAND*-- CAUGHT HIM *OFF GUARD!*

BUT I'M TOO LATE --*TOO LATE!*

DON'T HIT *HIM*, YOU RAT!

THE BOY HAS NO MORE BALANCE NOW THAN HE DID *BEFORE*-- BUT AN *AFTER-EFFECT* OF THE BOAT-SHAKING EXPLOSION IS THE *WAVES* NOW SLAMMING THE PLANE, FLIPPING BUCKY *FORWARD*...

UHHH!

LET'S *BEAT* IT, CAP! THIS IS GETTIN' US *NOWHERE!*

RIGHT AS *RAIN*, BUDDY!

WE'RE IN THE *STATES*, WHICH IS ALL I *WANTED* FOR NOW.

LISTEN, SCUM, AND LISTEN *HARD!*

IF YOU'RE MAN ENOUGH TO *CONTINUE* THIS, MEET ME AT THE *TORCH OF FRIENDSHIP* IN AN HOUR!

I DON'T NEED A *SIGHTSEEING* TOUR! WE'LL FINISH THIS *NOW!*

NO WE WON'T, CAP! THOSE SAILORS NEED US *MORE!*

FOR A MOMENT *LONGER*, CAPTAIN AMERICA STARES AT HIS FLEEING FOES, ALMOST *WISHING AWAY* THE TRUTH OF THE FALCON'S WORDS.

THEN HE TURNS *ABRUPTLY* AND SLICES *DOWNWARD*, THE FALCON FOLLOWING...

FISH FLASH AWAY, SPARKLING, BEFORE THE INTRUDERS-- BUT THEIR BEAUTY IS *LOST* ON THESE GRIM BATTLERS AGAINST DEATH!

AND WHEN THE LAST MAN IS **SAVED**, THE TWO ADVENTURERS SWIM **AWAY**, SALT WATER GRABBING THEIR THROATS AND SLICKENING THEIR BODIES, WITH **MEMORIES** OF THE RESCUES ALREADY FADING---

--BEFORE THE NEED FOR PLANNING THE **FUTURE**.

DO YOU THINK THAT MANIAC WOULD BE **CRAZY** ENOUGH TO **BE** WHERE HE SAID, STEVE?

HE'LL **BE** THERE, HONEY. I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE **TORCH OF FRIENDSHIP**..

--BUT IT **SOUNDS** LIKE A SPOT HE'D WANT FOR A FINALE.

SO YOU TWO GET TO THE **POLICE**--TELL THEM TO **CORDON OFF** THAT AREA--

--AND I'LL GO ON **OVER** THERE, TO **FINISH** THIS LITTLE DRAMA WITH HIM AND THE BOY.

TO SCREW UP AN OLD **JOKE**, BUDDY: "WHAT DO YOU MEAN '**YOU**', WHITE MAN?"

WE'LL BE COMIN' **ALONG** ON THIS.

WAIT A MINUTE, SAM. THIS IS **MY** FIGHT.

BULL, MAN. WE BEEN HAVING TOO **MANY** GRUDGE MATCHES AROUND HERE.

IF WE'RE A **TEAM**, WE'RE A **TEAM**!

ALL **THREE** OF US, STEVE! CAPTAIN AMERICA'S JUST NOT A **LONER** ANY MORE.

THE GENTLE EMOTIONS ARE **FUNNY** IN THIS MAN. THEY CHASE EACH OTHER BEHIND HIS EYES---

--BUT HIS **MOUTH** SAYS ONLY:

OKAY---

THEN HE TOSSES HIS HEAD LIKE A *STALLION*. HE *PIVOTS*, THE ALREADY-DRIED *SALT* ON HIS BACK CRACKING, AND HE *SPRINTS* DOWN GOLD COAST SAND...

LET'S MOVE!

A *LIFEGUARD*, ASKED FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE NEAREST *POLICE STATION*, IS *STARTLED* AT THE SIGHT OF HIS QUESTIONERS -- AND THUS BECOMES THE FIRST OF *MANY* SO TAKEN ABACK...

HOLY NED! THE HIPPIES, THE YIPPIES, THE ZIPPIES -- AND NOW *THIS!*

MIAMI POLICE 5TH PRECINCT

I'M MOVING TO *TAMPA!*

--ROPING OFF THE TORCH SHOULD KEEP EVERY-ONE *SAFE*, SERGEANT.

YEAH? AND IF THERE'S A *FAKE* CAPTAIN AMERICA IN THIS CITY, LIKE YOU SAY---

-- HOW DO I KNOW *YOU'RE* NOT HIM?

I SEE YOUR *POINT*, SERGEANT.

WILL YOU SETTLE FOR A SLIGHTLY WATER-SOAKED *IDENTIFICATION CARD* FROM THE AVENGERS?

LEMME *LOOK*, J.W.

SIGNED BY--- THE *VISION*, ACTING CHAIRMAN.

YOU BETTER SEE IF *ANDROIDS* HAVE LEGAL *RIGHTS* IN FLORIDA, J.W.

HOMER, *I'M* THE SERGEANT IN THIS PRECINCT. GET YOUR TAIL OVER TO *BAYFRONT PARK* AND BLOCK THE TORCH OFF.

AND IF YOU SEE THAT *OTHER* CAPTAIN AMERICA, YOU LEAVE HIM *BE*, HEAR?

RIGHT *AWAY*, SARGE.

JUST YOU WAIT TILL I TAKE THE *DETECTIVE EXAM*, YOU OLD---

THOSE ARE THE *MIAMI* POLICE. NOW LET'S LOOK IN ON THE *NEW YORK* VARIETY: PATROLMAN BOB COURTNEY AND SGT. BRIAN MULDOON.

BLAST! COURTNEY -- YOU *REALLY* THINK WE SHOULD BE DOING THIS?

WE'VE BEEN ALL *THROUGH* THAT, SARGE.

WE HAVE ONLY *SUSPICIONS* THAT STEVE ROGERS WAS INVOLVED IN FRAMING YOU---

--GETTING YOU *SUSPENDED*---

-- NOTHING WE CAN TAKE TO THE *COMMISSIONER*.

BUT *BREAKING AND ENTERING* GOES AGAINST MY GRAIN.

SO IT'S UP TO *US* TO INVESTIGATE HIM *OURSELVES!*

WHY ARE YOU SO ANXIOUS TO *DO* THIS?

I HATE *CROOKED COPS*. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS *THAT*.

NOW, LOOK FOR ANYTHING TO SHOW HE'S NOT WHAT HE *SEEMS* TO BE.

YEAH, YEAH-- OKAY.

MINUTES PASS, AND THEN:

NOTHING! IF ROGERS HAS *SECRETS*, THEY'RE *WELL-KEPT* ONES.

PUT EVERYTHING BACK THE WAY YOU *FOUND* IT AND LET'S GET OUT!

OH CRIPES!

HEY! HEY *YOU!* WHAT'S THE BIG *IDEA?*

YOU AIN'T MY TENANT!

MUST BE THE *MANAGER*.

UH--HI! WE'RE SOME *FRIENDS* OF ROGERS'--- STEVE'S---

--FROM THE *FORCE*, SEE? AND--UH--WE'RE GOING TO THROW A *SURPRISE PARTY* FOR HIM--

SO WE'D *APPRECIATE* IT IF YOU DIDN'T *MENTION* THIS TO HIM, OKAY?

WELL, IF YOU'RE FUZZ--

"SURPRISE PARTY"? THAT LINE HAD *WHISKERS* WHEN ABE LINCOLN WORE *KNICKERS*.

I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED *THAT* EVEN IF I *HADN'T* RECOGNIZED YOU, SGT. MULDOON.

BUT WHY ARE YOU MESSING WITH *ROGERS?*

STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN MANHATTAN--- THINGS THAT WILL PLAY *PIVOTAL* ROLES IN STEVE ROGERS' LIFE---

-- IF HE LIVES THROUGH THIS *MIAMI* AFTER-NOON!

IT'S ONLY ANOTHER *HALF MILE* TO THE TORCH, ACCORDING TO THE POLICE DIRECTIONS.

WE BETTER *SPLIT UP*, THEN--IN CASE THOSE DUDES HAVE GOT A *TRAP* IN MIND.

A *TRAP*! I'D BE SURPRISED IF THEY *DIDN'T*---

BANZAI, RATS!

BUCKY!!

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM SAID YOU BUMS HADN'T BEEN OFFICIALLY *WELCOMED* YET---

SO I TOOK IT ON MYSELF TO *REMEDY* THAT SITUATION!

BESIDES, MY PARTNER WANTS TO MEET THIS JOHNNY-COME-LATELY *SOLO!*

THAT MANIAC *STILL* HASN'T FIGURED OUT THAT I'M THE *ORIGINAL* CAP!

TAKE OFF, BUDDY! *SHARON* AND *I* CAN TOTAL THIS *CLOWN*!

FALCON, HE'S GOT *SUPER-STRENGTH*, AND YOU TWO *DON'T*!

YEAH, BUT HE'S NOT *INVULNERABLE*.

GO *ON*, MAN--- *SPLIT*!

THERE GOES THE IDEA OF FIGHTING AS A *TEAM*--- BUT THE DECISION WASN'T *OURS* TO MAKE.

STILL, I'M BETTING ON *SAM* AND *SHARON* TO TAKE HIM. IF I DIDN'T HAVE FAITH IN THEM BY *NOW* ---

THIS IS GONNA BE *FUN*. I GET TO POUND ON BOTH A *COLORED CREEP* AND A *TOMATO* AT THE SAME TIME!

--AND THEY SAID SUPER-HEROING DIDN'T *PAY!*

YOU STUPID *BIGOT!* *YOU'RE* NO SUPER-HERO -- BUT YOU'D BETTER THANK PROVIDENCE YOU'RE *SUPER*---

--BECAUSE OTHERWISE I'D PUT YOU AWAY WITH *ONE PUNCH!*

THUMK!

KPOW!

THE WAY I *FEEL* ABOUT YOU, I MIGHT JUST DO IT *ANY-WAY!*

NOT BAD FOR A *DARKIE*, BOY--

-- BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW *BETTER*--

-- THAN TO GO UP AGAINST YOUR *BETTERS!*

AND NOW FOR YOU, GIRLIE!

FALCON! ARE YOU HURT?

NAH--- BE WITH YA--- IN A SECOND.

TAKE HIM, SHARON.

JUST LIKE A DAME-- GETTIN' EMOTIONAL WHEN SHE SHOULD KEEP HER HEAD!

--AND IT'S GONNA COST YA, FRAIL!

KRAK!

YOU BET I'M A WOMAN, BUCKY---

--AND I DO ACT LIKE ONE---

--- BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I ACT LIKE A LADY!

BUNCH!

WOMEN HAVE CHANGED A LOT SINCE THE 1950'S, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT YET---

--JUST LIKE EVERY-ONE ELSE-- RIGHT, FALCON?

HEY!

WE'VE GOT TEAMWORK, SONNY---

YOU KNOW IT, MAMA!

--AND YOU'VE ONLY GOT *HATE!*

MIAMI IS A ***PLACID*** CITY, EXCEPT DURING POLITICAL CONVENTIONS AND ROCK CONCERTS--- SO ON THIS DAY, THE ***LOUDEST*** SOUNDS TO BE HEARD ARE THE ***CRASH*** OF THE FALCON'S FIST AGAINST BUCKY'S JAW -- AND THE CONSEQUENT ***THUD*** OF THE BOY HITTING THE PAVEMENT.

THE TORCH OF FRIENDSHIP

MEANWHILE, ON BLOCKED-OFF ***BISCAYNE BOULEVARD,*** OUTSIDE BAYFRONT PARK, AN EXCITED ***CROWD*** COMPOSED OF FISHERMEN, YOUNG MOTHERS, RETIRED NORTHERNERS, TEENAGERS, AND TOURISTS HAS GATHERED TO SEE THE FABLED ***CAPTAIN AMERICA-***

MIAMI POLICE

POLICE

HE'S *IN* THERE, ALL RIGHT, C.A.

MY BOYS GOT HERE *AFTER* HE DID, BUT WE'VE CAUGHT GLIMPSES OF HIM AMONG THE *PALMS* FROM TIME TO TIME.

THANKS, SARGE. NOW JUST MAKE SURE EVERYBODY KEEPS *BACK*--

--BECAUSE *THIS* COULD BE THE *TOUGHEST* BATTLE OF MY *LIFE!*

ARE YOU *KIDDING*, C.A.?

YOU'VE FOUGHT EVERYTHING FROM THE *RED SKULL* TO *SPACE MONSTERS!*

SURE, SARGE-- BUT I'VE NEVER FOUGHT THE *EVIL* SIDE OF MY *OWN* NATURE.

AND THAT'S WHAT HE *IS*, AFTER ALL--

THE TORC F FR

--A MAN WHO *BEGAN* WITH THE SAME DREAMS *I* DID---

--AND ENDED AS AN INSANE, BIGOTED *SUPERPATRIOT!*

HE *IS* WHAT HE *IS* BECAUSE HE *ADMIRED* ME-- WANTED TO *COPY* ME.

HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M THE MAN HE IDOLIZED -- BUT *I* KNOW IT!

IN A VERY *REAL WAY*, I'M *RE-SPONSIBLE* FOR ALL THE EVIL HE'S DONE!

NOW I HAVE TO *FACE* HIM, AND *FINISH* THIS.

BUT CAN I *FINISH* A MAN WHO'S MY *BIGGEST FAN?*

¡HHHHH!
AUUGGHH
YOURS!
GET
YOU
NOW
NOW, SCUM!

IT WAS REAL *FRIENDLY* OF YOU TO KEEP THE *COPS* AWAY FROM US, BUDDY!

YOU 'N ME GOTTA HAVE THIS OUT *PRIVATELY!*

THE *TRAITOR* CAPTAIN AMERICA OF THE *'70's*--

--AND *ME*, THE CAP OF THE *'50's*: THE RIGHTFUL SUCCESSOR TO THE *ORIGINAL* CAP!

R-EEK!

MISTER, YOU'RE LIKE A DIME-STORE *COPY* OF THE MONA LISA--

--YOU *LOOK* LIKE THE REAL THING--

POW!

BUT YOUR *MATERIALS* ARE TOO *CHEAP* TO *FOOL* ANYBODY!

YOU THINK I'M A *TRAITOR?* GROW *UP*, FELLA-- TIME'S HAVE *CHANGED!*

AMERICA'S IN DANGER FROM *WITHIN* AS WELL AS *WITHOUT!*

THERE'S *ORGANIZED CRIME, INJUSTICE,* AND *FASCISM*--

--OR WOULDN'T YOU *RECOGNIZE* THAT?

ARE YOU CALLING ME--A *FASCIST?*

YOU MEALY-MOUTHED *RAT!*

YOU'RE *SCARED* TO FACE UP TO THE COMMIES IN A *WAR*, LIKE A *REAL* MAN!

I'M A REAL MAN!

AND I'LL *KILL* YOU TO *PROVE* IT!

HE'S *SICK*-- REALLY *SICK*--

--BUT HE'S ALSO *STRONGER* THAN I AM!

CRIPES! HE'S GOT CAP *OFF-BALANCE*, AND THAT JAGGED *SHIELD'S* RIGHT IN HIS FACE!

MY ORDERS SAID NOT TO *INTERFERE*, BUT...

LOOK! HE'S GONNA KILL *CAP!*

STOP HIM! GET IN THERE AND *STOP* HIM, OFFICER!

MIAMI POLICE DEPT.

BUT *THEN*, WITH A *TREMENDOUS* THRUST OF *LEG MUSCLES* THAT HAVE PROVED THEIR WORTH IN *COUNTLESS* COMBATS--

MISTER, I'M NOT AFRAID OF *ANY-BODY!*

CAPTAIN AMERICA *TRIUMPHS!*

DEDICATED

THE

35TH PR

UNITED STA

MERICA

FOOM

YOU'RE A GOOD *FIGHTER*, I'LL GIVE YOU *THAT*--

--BUT IT COMES WITH THE *JOB*, DOESN'T IT?

SINCE MY IDEA OF HAVING PEOPLE *IMPERSONATE* THE ORIGINAL CAP OBVIOUSLY *CAUGHT ON* AFTER THEY PUT ME AWAY--

--THEY WOULD HAVE *CHOSEN* A GUY LIKE YOU!

BUT YOU'VE **HAD** IT, RAT-- IF YOU DON'T **KNOW** IT!

WE'RE **BOTH** COPIES OF THE **REAL THING,** BUT I'M **STRONGER** THAN YOU! I DIDN'T HAVE ANY **VITA-RAYS** TO SOFTEN ME UP*

*SEE LAST ISH--ROY.

THAT'S WHERE YOU'VE GOT IT **WRONG,** MISTER-- BECAUSE WE'RE **NOT** BOTH COPIES! I **AM** THE ORIGINAL CAP!

HIS TAUT VOICE CONTINUES TELLING THE **HISTORY** OF HIS LIFE, AND **MORE--**

--TELLING OF THE '30'S AND '40'S, AS SEEN BY A MAN WHO **LIVED** THEM.

AND IN THE FACE OF THE **OTHER** MAN, SOMETHING **HAPPENS**--SOMETHING UGLY--

--AS EYES THAT ONCE HELD THE COOL GLOW OF PATRIOTIC **FERVOR**--

AND LATER FLAMED WITH THE BRIGHT FIRE OF **MADNESS**--

--NOW **BLAZE** WITH THE ROARING INFERNO OF ABSOLUTE **HATE!**

HE **KNOWS!** HE KNOWS THE AWFUL, TERRIBLE **MISTAKE** HE HAS MADE--

HE KNOWS HE HAS **LOATHED** WHAT HE SHOULD HAVE **LOVED**--

--AND, MOUTHING **INSANITIES,** HE HURLS HIMSELF--

--ONTO THE FIST OF SOMEONE *MORE THAN A MAN:*

THE *ULTIMATE*-- THE *ONLY*-- CAPTAIN AMERICA!

CAPTAIN AMERICA STANDS AND *LOOKS* AT HIS FALLEN ADVERSARY.

CAPTAIN AMERICA STANDS AND *THINKS* OF HIS FALLEN ADVERSARY--AND IN THE MIDST OF THE *CROWD*, HE IS *ALONE* WITH HIS THOUGHTS.

HE IS ALONE *IN* HIS THOUGHTS.

IN HIS THOUGHTS, HE IS ONCE AGAIN A GAWKY YOUNGSTER NAMED ***STEVE ROGERS***, WANTING SO ***DESPERATELY*** TO FIGHT AMERICA'S ENEMIES THAT HE VOLUNTEERED TO TEST AN UNKNOWN ***SERUM*** --AND SO BECAME THE ***GUARDIAN*** OF HIS COUNTRY.

BUT NO ONE KNEW ***ANYTHING*** ABOUT STEVE ROGERS--LEAST OF ALL ***HIMSELF***. THERE HAD BEEN NO ***SECURITY CHECKS*** ON HIM, BEFORE ENTRUSTING HIM WITH HIS POWER.

WHAT IF ***HE*** HAD HAD THE ***FATAL FLAW***, THAT WOULD HAVE DRIVEN HIM TO ***SUPER-PATRIOTISM, MADNESS***, AND ***MAYHEM?***

CAP! ***CAP!*** ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

WHAT IF THINGS HAD BEEN JUST ***SLIGHTLY*** DIFFERENT?

I'M...OKAY, SHARON.

WHAT ABOUT ***HIM***, CAP?

HE'LL BE FINE TOO--I GUESS. THE AUTHORITIES WILL PUT HIM AND BUCKY IN THEIR BACK ***SUSPENDED-ANIMATION TANKS***, UNTIL A ***CURE*** CAN BE FOUND--***IF*** ONE CAN BE FOUND.

AND ***I'LL*** GO BACK TO FIGHTING FOR A BETTER AMERICA WHILE THEY ***SLEEP***.

BUT ALL THE TIME, I'LL BE ***THINKING...***

...THAT HE COULD HAVE BEEN ***ME***.

AND NOW, IF YOU'LL ***EXCUSE*** ME...I'D LIKE TO BE ***ALONE***....

JUST FOR...A LITTLE WHILE...!

-FINIS-

CAPT. AMERICA

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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CAPTAIN AMERICA™ AND THE FALCON™

I TOOK CARE OF YOUR BUDDY, SHIELD-SLINGER--

--AND HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOURS!

"VENGEANCE!" CRIES THE VIPER!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

"VENI, VIDI, VICI" ... VIPER!

THAT'S LATIN FOR "I CAME, I SAW, I CONQUERED," MARVELITE.

OKAY, CAPTAIN AMERICA-- WE'RE GONNA *WASTE* YA!

THAT'S *PUNK* FOR "EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME *INJURED*."

VOTE USE THE POWER 18

C'MON IN, PILGRIM! THIS ONE STARTS WITH A *BANG*, AND JUST KEEPS ON *TRUCKIN'*!

STEVE ENGLEHART & STEVE GERBER, AUTHORS * SAL BUSCEMA, ARTIST

J. VERPOORTEN, INKER * ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER * PETRA GOLDBERG, COLORIST * ROY THOMAS, EDITOR

THE COWLED COMMANDER SAID THIS GUY DON'T GET TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS--

--SO HE DON'T GET THERE!

RIGHT ON, BALL 'N' CHAIN! THIS IS ONE SUPERHERO THAT'S SEEN HIS LAST SUNRISE--HUH?

MISTER, I'VE BEEN OUT OF TOWN-- AND MEMORIES GET SHORTER EVERY DAY--

--BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU BELIEVE THAT!

THUNK!

NOW WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOU--

GLUNG!

NO QUESTIONS, MAN! BEATIN' GUYS USIN' ONLY BRASS KNUCKS DON'T ENTITLE YA!

AND YOU AINT GONNA TAKE ME--'CAUSE I GOT A MUTHUH OF A WEAPON, AND A THING FOR STOMPIN' PEOPLE!

THAT'S *FUNNY*, BECAUSE I *DON'T!*

DIM

--BUT I *WILL* IF I *HAVE* TO!

CAP! WHAT'S *THIS?* AND WHAT'RE YOU DOING BACK IN *NEW YORK?*

WHAT I WAS DOING IN *MIAMI*, CARPENTER: *BRAWLING.*

BUT *HERE*, I DON'T KNOW *WHY.* THEY JUST *JUMPED* ME.

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF 'EM FOR YOU. CAN YOU MAKE IT TO THE *STATION* LATER TO PREFER *CHARGES?*

BETTER THAN *THAT*, CARP. I'LL *BEAT* YOU THERE!

I WAS ON MY WAY TO SEE THE *COMMIS-SIONER* WHEN I *MET* THE THREE LITTLE PIGS--NO PUN *INTENDED.*

ANY FOOL CAN PUT *SOME* OF THIS TOGETHER: THE COMMIS-SIONER LEFT ME A MESSAGE TO COME *SEE* HIM--AND TO COME AS *CAPTAIN AMERICA*--

--AND OBVIOUSLY, *SOMEBODY*--THE "*COWLED COMMANDER*"--DIDN'T WANT ME TO *KEEP* MY APPOINTMENT!

SOMETHING'S BEEN *BREWING* WHILE I WAS AWAY--SOMETHING *BIG*--

--BECAUSE EVEN IF MY *REASONING* DIDN'T PUT ME WISE--

--THE FACT THAT THE COMMIS-SIONER WANTS ME TO COME *HERE*--

--AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PRECINCT IN *HELL'S KITCHEN*--

--IS *MORE* THAN ENOUGH TO TELL ME THERE'S *DANGER* IN THE AIR!

YOU WANTED TO *SEE* ME, COMMISSIONER?

YES, I *DID*, CAP. COME IN *QUICKLY*, PLEASE--AND CLOSE THE DOOR *BEHIND* YOU.

I *APOLOGIZE* FOR THE *CLOAK-AND-DAGGER* CHARADES--

--BUT I NEEDED TO BE SURE WE COULD TALK IN *PRIVATE*--AND IN *SECRET!*

"*SURE*" APPARENTLY WASN'T *GOOD ENOUGH*, SIR...

ON MY WAY *HERE*, I WAS ATTACKED BY THREE *HOODS*--SENT BY "*THE COWLED COMMANDER*" TO KEEP ME *AWAY* FROM YOU.

"*THE COWLED COMMANDER*"! BY JASPER, *HE'S* THE MAN I CALLED YOU IN ABOUT: *THE MAN WITH NO IDENTITY!*

TO KNOW OF OUR *RENDEZVOUS*, HIS SPIES MUST BE *MUCH* MORE FIRMLY ENTRENCHED IN MY DEPARTMENT THAN I'D *FEARED!*

SPIES...IN YOUR *DEPARTMENT?* YOU MEAN, AMONG YOUR *POLICE OFFICERS?*

YES! IT'S ALL PART OF THE *CORRUPTION* THE CRIME COMMISSION UNCOVERED!

THEY FOUND SOLID PROOF OF *PAYOFFS* TAKEN BY WHAT I THOUGHT WERE SOME OF MY *BEST MEN...*

...AND THEY DUG UP *RUMORS* ABOUT OTHERS: MEN WHOM I'VE HAD TO *SUSPEND* PENDING FURTHER *INVESTIGATION--*

MEN LIKE *SGT. MULDOON.*

MULDOON?

BUT, COMMISSIONER--HAVING *WORKED* WITH HIM, I BELIEVE HE'S *INNOCENT!*

SO DO **I**, BUT MY HANDS ARE **TIED.** HOWEVER, I SPOKE OF **FURTHER** INQUIRIES...

THAT'S WHY I WANT **YOU:** TO TRY TO **CLEAR** MEN LIKE MULDOON--

--AND TO UNCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THE MAN **BEHIND** ALL THIS: **THE COWLED COMMANDER!**

IT'S A BIG **JOB.** WILL YOU **DO** IT?

OF **COURSE,** SIR. SINCE I'VE NEVER GIVEN UP MY **UNDERCOVER ROLE** AS A **COP--**

--I'VE STILL GOT A **STAKE** IN THE DEPARTMENT!

--NOT TO MENTION SOMETHING CALLED **JUSTICE.**

GOOD! OH, I JUST REMEMBERED A **CALL** I HAVE TO MAKE.

STAY **HERE.** I'LL BE RIGHT **BACK.**

AND WHY **HAVEN'T** I GIVEN UP MY COVER? I ONLY **TOOK** THE JOB TO DISCOVER WHO WAS **KIDNAPPING** CITY OFFICIALS--AND I **DID.***

NOW IT JUST INTERFERES WITH MY LIFE AS **CAPTAIN AMERICA--** SO WHAT **IS** IT THAT KEEPS ME **ON?**

*CAP. #139.-R.

BUT THAT QUERY IS NEVER TO BE **ANSWERED.**

BECAUSE--

KA-

WELL, THAT'S HEAVY! WONDER HOW THE REST OF THE PARTNERSHIP IS GETTING ALONG. (OR, WHO NEEDS DRAMATIC TRANSITIONS AFTER A SCENE LIKE THAT?)

AHHH... BACK TO THE OFFICE GRIND.

I SURE LOVE IT, THOUGH. PICKIN' A JOB WITH NO SET HOURS, SO I CAN CHANGE TO THE FALCON WITH NO HASSLES--

--WAS DEFINITELY ONE OF MY BETTER MOVES!

HI, FIGARO! MEET ANY INTERESTING RATS LATELY?

YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHEN I'M COMIN' AROUND, DON'TCHA?

GOOD THING NOT EVERYBODY'S GOT THAT TALENT.

OH, I DON'T KNOW, SAM. I'M GETTIN' TO BE GOOD AT IT.

BUT THEN, LITTLE LEILA'S GOOD AT ALMOST EVERYTHING.

I EVEN BEEN A STREET-FIGHTIN' FOX LATELY, MAN. ME 'N' A BUNCHA THE BROTHERS RESCUED THE FALCON A WHILE BACK.

IS THAT RIGHT?*

*YEP, AS DETAILED IN CA&F #154. --ROY.

FALC KINDA DUG ME, TOO. I MIGHT JUST GET SOMETHIN' ON WITH HIM--HIM BEIN' MY KINDA MAN.

HE'S A FIGHTER- NOT LIKE SOME SOCIAL WORKERS I KNOW.

IF YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR FIGHTERS, MAMA, I'VE GIVEN UP TELLIN' YOU THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN THAT. BUT YOU'RE FREE, BLACK, AND OVER 21, SO YOU MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND!

STILL, I THINK YOU'LL FIND THE FALCON'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM RAFE AND HIS GANG.

MAYBE HE'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT HIS LOVE LIFE!

I WISH I KNEW WHETHER I *LIKED* THAT FOX OR NOT! SOMETIMES SHE'S LIKE *FINGERNAILS* ON A *BLACKBOARD*, AND SOMETIMES SHE REALLY TURNS ME *ON!*

I COULD PROBABLY *PROMOTE* SOMETHING BY PLAYING HER BETWEEN MY TWO IDENTITIES --BUT I GUESS I'M NOT *BUILT* THAT WAY.

I'VE GOT TO CLEAR MY *HEAD*-- SO IT'S TIME FOR SAM WILSON TO FADE AGAIN--

--SO THAT OLD "*STREET FIGHTIN'* *FALCON* CAN GET SOME ACTION!

I OUGHT TO SEE IF *REDWING'S* OKAY, ANYWAY...

WE HAVEN'T DONE ANY BUSINESS SINCE I PICKED HIM UP ON *MOSCA CAY*, AFTER THAT FAKE *CAP* LEFT HIM THERE.

HI, REDWING! THAT MAKES BOTH A *CAT* AND A *BIRD* THAT FOLLOW ME AROUND!

SKAAAAA

AT THIS RATE, I COULD BECOME *WALT DISNEY!*

HARLEM LOOKS *QUIET*-- NO *MUGGINGS*, NO *ROBBERIES*, NOT EVEN A KID PINCHING *PENNY CANDY!* SOMETHING'S *WRONG!*

AN' *THAT* MEANS IT'S TIME TO PAY ANOTHER CALL ON *MORGAN!*

AH... ISN'T THAT *NICE?* IN THE MIDDLE OF THE *SLUMS*, HE'S GOT A *ROOF GARDEN*...

TOO BAD THAT LIFESTYLE GETS *PAID* FOR--

--WITH THE *LIVES* AND WELL-BEING OF HIS GHETTO *NEIGHBORS!*

AH, *THANK YOU*, MONA.

HOWDY, MORGAN! HOW'S THE AIR UP HERE--

--AWAY FROM US POOR FOLK!

IT'S...THE FALCON!

JUST THE BIRD I BEEN WAITIN' T'GET IN MY HAND!

COOL IT, QUINT--TILL WE HEAR WHAT THE MAN WANTS!

BETTER LISTEN TO YOUR BOSS, QUINT...'FORE I POUND YOU DOWN TO A PILE OF PEPPER--AGAIN!

WATCH IT, FALCON--!

ENOUGH, QUINT! AND YOU, TOO, FALCON! RELAX!

AFTER ALL, WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE! MONA, FIX THE FALCON A DRINK, AND WE'LL TALK LIKE REASONABLE MEN.

I LIKE YOUR STYLE, FALC...WE COULD MAKE SOME BEAUTIFUL MONEY TOGETHER!

MORGAN, YOU'RE SICK!

SICK? COME ON, MAN... I'M PRAGMATIC, THAT'S ALL.

YOU'RE SCUM, MORGAN--THE WORST KIND!

YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN WHO'D SELL HIS BROTHERS' SOULS TO A NEEDLE--TAKE A KID'S DINNER AS PAYMENT FOR A NUMBERS TICKET!

YOU'RE THE KIND OF HUMAN FILTH--

YOU GONNA LET HIM TALK TO YOU THAT WAY, HONEY?

OF COURSE I AM! WE'RE FRIENDS, REMEMBER?

RIIING

BOSS, I THINK YOU BETTER TAKE THIS. SOUNDS... *IMPORTANT.*

THANKS, BIM.

YEAH, THIS IS MORGAN. *WHAT??*

YOU'VE GOT TO BE *KIDDING! CAPTAIN AMERICA?*

RIGHT, MAC. THANKS FOR CALLING.

WHAT *ABOUT* CAP? *SPILL* IT, MORGAN!!

HE'S *DEAD,* FALCON-- KILLED BY A *BOMB* IN THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.

YOU SLUG! I WANT THE TRUTH! HOW'D YOU KNOW? IF YOU--

I HAD NOTHING TO *DO* WITH IT!

I'M A *BUSINESS-MAN,* FALCON!

I KNOW *EVERYTHING* THAT HAPPENS IN THIS BURG!

MORGAN, I *KNOW* YOU'RE UP TO YOUR *EARRING* IN CRIME! WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS *CLEAN* WHEN I WANT TO SQUASH YOUR FAT *FACE?*

'CAUSE I GET THE NAUSEATING FEELING THAT IF YOU *WERE* BEHIND IT--

--NOTHIN' COULD STOP YOU FROM TAKIN' THE *CREDIT!*

AS THE FALCON MAKES HIS WAY OVER THE **ROOFTOPS** TO POLICE HQ--ACROSS TOWN, AN INDIRECT **CAUSE** OF THE DISASTER SEARCHES FOR THREADS OF HIS LIFE.

3RD POLICE PRECINCT

JEEZ, IT'S **MULDOON**--IN **CIVVIES!** HE SURE LOOKS **OUT OF PLACE** WHEN HE'S NOT IN UNIFORM!

IS THAT **ALL** YOU SEE, DICK? LOOK AT HIS **SHOULDERS.** HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S AGED **TEN YEARS!**

CAPTAIN F[illegible]RIS

HELLO, CAPTAIN.

HELLO, BRIAN. WON'T YOU HAVE A **SEAT?**

NO! I DON'T WANT TO BE **POLITE** ABOUT MY HONESTY!

...I'M **SORRY,** CAPTAIN...BUT CAN'T YOU JUST **TELL ME** WHAT'S BEING DONE?

EVERYTHING, BRIAN--YOU KNOW THAT. THE MEN ARE DOING THEIR **BEST** FOR YOU. BUT SO FAR...

WELL, **NO** NEWS IS **GOOD** NEWS.

YOU MEAN THE **ENTIRE FORCE** CAN'T PROVE ME GUILTY OR INNOCENT--

--BUT I'M STILL **SUSPENDED,** BECAUSE OF SOME CRUDDY **RUMORS,?!**

THE PUBLIC'S UP IN **ARMS,** BRIAN. WE'D REINSTATE YOU IN A **MINUTE**-- BUT HOW WOULD IT **LOOK?**

LISTEN, MARGE AND I ARE HAVING A **PARTY** FRIDAY NIGHT...

I **COULDN'T** CAPTAIN... THANKS ANYWAY.

CAPTAIN, THE FORCE IS MY **LIFE!** I'VE **NEVER** BEGGED-- NO, **CUT** THAT!

SIR, WHEN WILL THE INVESTI-GATION BE **CONCLUDED?**

CAPTAIN FERRIS

ALL I CAN SAY IS: WE'RE **WORKING** ON IT, BRIAN.

WELL, SO AM **I,** NOW! IF THE **FORCE** CAN'T HELP ME, I'LL BLASTED WELL HELP **MYSELF!**

AND I'VE GOT AN IDEA HOW TO **DO** IT!

MEANWHILE, A HEART-SICK FALCON ARRIVES AT THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION...

HURRY UP WITH THOSE DIGGING TOOLS! SOMEONE MAY STILL BE ALIVE IN THERE!

DON'T COUNT ON IT, CHIEF.

LOOKS LIKE THAT FLAG-WAVIN' AVENGER FINALLY BOUGHT IT!

SMOKE BILLOWS UP INTO THE ALREADY HAZY NEW YORK SKY... PERHAPS IT'S THAT WHICH CAUSES A SINGLE TEAR TO FORM IN THE EYE OF THE BATTLE-HARDENED FALCON. PERHAPS.

THE DEBRIS SIZZLES AND CRACKLES. IS THAT THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS FOR A MENTOR AND FRIEND?

WHERE'S THE COMMISSIONER? WHY'D HE LEAVE AT--

SHARON!!

FALCON! CAP WAS IN THERE!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND -- HE'S DEAD!

ALL I UNDERSTAND IS--THERE'S BEEN AN EXPLOSION. AND I'M GONNA HAVE ME A LOOK THRU THE WRECKAGE.

AFTER ALL, CAP DOESN'T DIE EASY...

DO YOU THINK--?

'COURSE I DO! HE'S PROBABLY JUST PLAYIN' DEAD! WE ONLY HAVETA FIND OUT WHY!

NOW IF I COULD JUST SWALLOW THAT MYSELF, I'D FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER!

BUT, MAN, LOOK AT THIS PLACE! AINT NOTHIN' LEFT IN ONE PIECE!

VOTE

SO MAYBE I'D BEST JUST ADMIT IT BEFORE I EVEN START DIGGING...

IF CAP LIVED THRU THIS... IT'S A FREAKIN' MIRACLE...

BUT AS THE SEARCH PROGRESSES, FALCON BEGINS TO WONDER...

NOTHING! NOT A HUNK OF HUMAN BONE, NOT EVEN A SHRED OF RED, WHITE, OR BLUE CLOTH...

AND WEIRDEST OF ALL--NO SIGN OF CAP'S SHIELD! NOT EVEN A BLAST LIKE THIS COULD'VE DESTROYED THAT--!

KEEP MOVIN' IN THERE! I WANT EVERY HUNK OF EVERYTHING LOOKED UNDER TILL WE FIND 'IM!

--I DUNNO... MAYBE THE SONUVAGUN DID--

WHAT'S THAT?!

UP ON THAT ROOF--

--A GLINT OF METAL...OR MAYBE GLASS. COULD BE CAP'S SHIELD--

--OR MAYBE SOME KINDA SIGNAL FROM THE SABOTEUR!

WHATEVER IT IS, AT THIS POINT IT'S WORTH CHECKING!

THERE'S JUST TOO MANY STRINGS HANGIN' LOOSE IN THIS MESS TO IGNORE ANYTHING!

LIKE, WHERE *IS* THE COMMISSIONER? THE COPS SAID HE WAS IN ANOTHER *OFFICE*-- *SURVIVED.*

--BUT NOW HE'S *GONE!*

LATER FOR THAT!

OKAY, FELLA, LET'S SEE YOUR *FACE!*

MY HUNCH IS YOU'RE NO IDLE *SPECTATOR!*

HARDLY, FALCON...

YOU SEE, I *ABANDONED* A BRILLIANT CAREER IN *ADVERTISING* TO SAVOR THIS MOMENT!

I *CAUSED* THAT EXPLOSION, FALCON! *I KILLED CAPTAIN AMERICA!* WHICH IS AS IT *SHOULD* BE--

--I AM BY NATURE, AN *ACTIVIST!* AND THUS, WHEN I HEARD THE CLARION CALL OF THE *COWLED COMMANDER*--

-- FOR I AM THE VIPER!

FOR *YEARS*, I LABORED IN ANONYMITY, SELLING OTHER MEN'S *PRODUCTS*, MAKING OTHER MEN'S *FORTUNES*--

--LAYING WASTE TO THE *VALUES* AND *ENVIRONMENT* OF A NATION FROM THE PRIVACY OF MY OFFICE! BUT, ALAS--

I *ANSWERED* ...WITH A *VENGEANCE!!*

WHO BUT A SUCCESSFUL MARKETER OF CHILDREN'S *TOYS* COULD HAVE CONCEIVED OF A DEADLY *BLOWGUN...*

...WHICH, WITH THE INSERTION OF TWO SIMPLE *LENSES*-- BECOMES A POWERFUL *TELESCOPE!*

THAT'S THE *GLINT* I SAW FROM BELOW!

SKAAA

PRECISELY! I--

WHA--?

ATTA BOY, REDWING!

VIPER, YOU'RE A BONA FIDE *BERSERKO,* BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME TO SIT YOU DOWN 'N *ANALYZE* YOU!

'CAUSE I'M TAKING YOU IN FOR *MURDER!*

BUT *FIRST,* VIPER-- FIRST I'M GONNA *"VIPE"* UP THIS ROOF WITH YOU, FOR KILLING THE GREATEST HERO THAT EVER *LIVED!*

YOU'RE A *FOOL,* FALCON! TYPICAL OF YOUR DEMOGRAPHIC SEGMENT!

YOU CANNOT APPRECIATE THE *GENIUS* THAT CREATED THESE RAZOR-SHARP *FANGS* --WHICH INJECT A NEW, REVOLUTIONARY--

--FASTER-ACTING *VENOM* THAT BRINGS *DEATH*-- WITHIN *MINUTES!*

VIPER, I ALWAYS *DID* HATE COMMERCIALS, BUT SOMEHOW I NEVER FIGURED...

--ON GETTING TO *STRIKE BACK* AT ONE!

WHAM!

FOOL, YOU *FORGET* THAT AMERICAN INDUSTRY NEVER SAYS *DIE*--

GNUNNGH!

THE GROGGY VIPER PULLS HIMSELF TO HIS FEET, WHILE HIS HAND REACHES OMINOUSLY FOR HIS LEG POUCH--

THE *COWLED COMMANDER* HAS ORDERED YOUR *DEATH!*

AND I *ALWAYS* SAY "*YES*" TO THE COWLED COMMANDER!

THEREFORE-- *TASTE IT!* *TASTE IT!* THE SOOTHING COOLNESS OF OF MY NEW BLUE--

--*VENOM*-*TIPPED DART!* TRY IT, FALCON! YOU'LL *LIKE* IT!

DIE, FALCON-- WITH *GUSTO!!*

=*UNGGH!*= THE *POISON!* I CAN FEEL IT *ALREADY!!*

FEELS LIKE MY BODY'S... ON *FIRE!*

BREATHING-- *HARD*...THROAT --LIKE THERE'S A *VICE* 'ROUND IT!

RING AROUND THE *COLLAR,* FALCON? IT MEANS YOU'RE *DYING!!*

...CAN'T STAND UP...

YEARS OF RESEARCH-- *VINDICATED* AT LAST! YEARS OF MOUTHING HYPER-BOLIC SLOGANS BY *DAY*-- AND DEVELOPING MY VENOMS AT *NIGHT!*

NOW I'VE LEFT THAT GREY FLANNEL WORLD *BEHIND*-- TO BECOME THE GREATEST *VILLAIN* WHO EVER *LIVED!*

NO SALE, VIPER!!

WHAT?! NO!! IT CAN'T BE!!

NOT *YOU!* I *WON,* I TELL YOU!

HE WHIRLS, THIS VIPER--AND HIS FEAR-SPLASHED EYES "SEE THE U.S.A." --IN LIVING COLOR!

IT'S ME, ALL RIGHT, VIPER! MY INVULNERABLE SHIELD TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST--

--AND BLIND LUCK BLEW ME THROUGH THE WINDOW! GOT CUT AND BRUISED--BUT NO MORE!

SO I HID--TRYING TO SMOKE MY ASSAILANT OUT!

BUT YOU, YOU MADMAN--YOU ENDANGERED HUNDREDS OF INNOCENT LIVES! AND I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME TO HEAR YOU CONFESS IT!

SO FOR THAT, VIPER--AND FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE HERE--YOU'RE GOING TO PAY--

--WITH INTEREST!

NO--STAY BACK!

NO WAY, MISTER!

THE WAY I FIGURE--YOU'RE TOO COWARDLY TO CARRY THOSE VIALS OF POISON--

--WITHOUT CARRYING SOME KIND OF ANTIDOTE!

AND I WANT IT!!

PUNG!

NEVER! BOTH YOU AND FALCON MUST--

AACCK!

YOUR FANGS ARE USELESS AGAINST MY *SHIELD*, VIPER!

THOK!

LIKE YOUR FALLEN *FRIEND*, YOU THINK ME *HELPLESS*, DON'T YOU?

BUT YOU'RE ABOUT TO *DISCOVER*, AMERICA--

--HOW PITIFULLY WRONG YOU ARE!

I'M *GLAD* THE BLAST DIDN'T KILL YOU, FOOL!

I'D RATHER DO IT *MYSELF!* IN THE NAME OF THE COWLED COMMANDER, I *STRIKE!*

STRIKE *OUT*, YOU MEAN.! IT'S *OVER*, SNAKE-FACE!

FWOK!

ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO ADD THE *FINISHING TOUCH* AND--

WAIT!!

HIT ME *NOW*, AND--

--THE FALCON'S FATE IS *SEALED!* ALL MY VIALS LOOK *ALIKE!* YOU'LL NEVER FIND THE ANTIDOTE IN *TIME!* ON THE *OTHER* HAND--

--GIVE ME MY FREEDOM, AND THE ANTIDOTE'S *YOURS*...NO *MUSS*, NO *FUSS!*

YOU'D *BARGAIN* THIS WAY FOR A MAN'S *LIFE!?* SO COLDLY...SO CALLOUSLY....?

YOU LEAVE ME NO *CHOICE*. I *CAN'T* LET THE FALCON DIE!

BUT I WARN YOU-- IF THIS IS A TRICK--

I DO NOT MAKE *FALSE CLAIMS*, AVENGER! *RELEASE* ME!

WARILY, CAP EASES HIS SHIELD OFF THE VENOMOUS VIPER--AND ALLOWS HIM TO STEP AWAY--

THE *ANTIDOTE*, VIPER-- TOSS IT TO ME! I'M *WAITING!*

NOT UNTIL I REACH THE *PARAPET*, CAPTAIN!

I DON'T *TRUST* YOU.

THEN, TRUE TO HIS WORD--

IT'S YOURS, CAPTAIN! THE VIAL AND THE VYING--FOR NOW.

BUT AS CAP RELAXES HIS GUARD TO SEIZE THE PRECIOUS FLUID--

THIS HAD BETTER BE RIGHT!

WE'VE SAVED YOUR LIFE, FALC--BUT SET A MADMAN LOOSE ON THE CITY!

--A SUDDEN INSPIRATION STRIKES THE VIPER!

WE HAVE A SAYING IN THE ADVERTISING GAME, CAPTAIN AMERICA! YOU MIGHT DO WELL TO REMEMBER IT:

NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON THE COMPETITION!

YOU HAVE TWO MINUTES OF LIFE LEFT TO YOU, MINE ENEMY!

AD MEN CAN DO A LOT IN TWO MINUTES!

BUT SINCE PARALYSIS IS ALREADY SETTING IN FOR YOU-- YOU'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO--

FADE TO BLACK!

LUCKILY, SINCE WE'RE ON MARVEL TIME, THOSE TWO MINUTES CARRY A 30-DAY GUARANTEE--UNTIL ABOUT PAGE ONE OF NEXT ISH! AFTER THAT--? JUST BE HERE, TIGER!

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CAPTAIN AMERICA™ AND THE FALCON™

Stan Lee PRESENTS: CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

THE CRIME WAVE BREAKS!

HERE ARE *TWO MINUTES* THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR *LIFE*, FRIEND--TO *DEATH!*

MY MIRACLE *POISON* IS ALREADY IN YOUR *BLOOD-STREAM*, BRINGING *OBLIVION*--

--UNLESS YOU TAKE THE *ANTIDOTE*, LYING OH-SO-QUAINTLY OUT OF YOUR *REACH!*

BUT THERE'S NO *CHANCE*, CAPTAIN AMERICA-- SO *FAREWELL!*

WHEN YOU SAY WHAT THE VIPER-- A BERSERK AD MAN TURNED KILLER-- JUST INTONED, YOU'VE SAID IT ALL! SO TURN THE PAGE, PILGRIM--THERE'S LITTLE TIME LEFT!

1105 Z

STEVE ENGLEHART script / SAL BUSCEMA art / JOHN VERPOORTEN inks / ARTIE SIMEK lettering / P. GOLDBERG color / ROY THOMAS editor

HIGH ABOVE THE PRONE PAIR, BEADY EYES STARE BRIGHTLY DOWNWARD.

SKAAAA

REDWING... THE FALCON'S HAWK!

REDWING! TO US... QUICKLY!

THE VIAL! BRING US THE VIAL!

SKEEE? SKEE?

NO, REDWING... THE VIAL...

NO USE...HE ONLY KNOWS FAMILIAR COMMANDS... DOESN'T UNDERSTAND...

ONLY TRYING...TO REVIVE HIS MASTER...

THEN...IF ANYBODY'S GOING...TO GET THAT ANTIDOTE...

...IT HAS TO BE... ME!

ELSE...IT'LL ALL END HERE... ON A DINGY ROOFTOP...

I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN! I WILL MAKE MYSELF...MOVE!

MY MISSION... HAS ALWAYS BEEN...TO SAVE A COUNTRY...

I CAN SAVE MYSELF!

BUT GRIT AND STEEL-TEMPERED DETERMINATION ARE ONLY THE SPUR --PERFORMANCE IS STILL THE HALLMARK OF SUCCESS.

HIS NERVES FEEL LIKE SPRUNG WIRES, LOOSE AND JANGLING DOWN THROUGH THE DARK INSIDES OF HIS BODY.

HIS FEET FEEL LIKE ANVILS, WELDED TO LEAD PIPES HE ONCE CALLED LEGS-- AND CONTINUALLY THREATENING TO BECOME TOO WEIGHTY TO DRAG.

THE SUN BEATS UPON HIM, ITS RAYS CRUSHING HIM CRUELLY INTO THE ASPHALT.

STRAIN BLURS HIS VISION-- AND ABRUPTLY HE CANNOT RECALL IF HIS EYELIDS ARE UP, OR HAVE COLLAPSED SHUT UNDER THEIR OWN MASS.

FAR AWAY, SOMEBODY'S RED-GLOVED FINGERS TWITCH SPASMODICALLY, REACHING FOR SOMETHING... REACHING...

...AND CLENCHING...

I...I DID...

IT'S SO HARD...SO HARD. NOW HE SEES BETWEEN HIM AND THE PRECIOUS SERUM A PLASTIC CAP...AND AGONY CALLS HIS NAME AS HE SWEATS TO PULL THAT CAP AWAY.

ALL IS HAZE...AND PAIN... AND A SOFT VOICE CALLING, CROONING "QUIT...RELAX... AND SLEEP..."

--FOR THIS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA--

--AND HE WILL LIVE!

POP!

A THUNDEROUS POP, CRESTING LIKE A WAVE ON HIS EARDRUMS, SNAGS HIS WANDERING ATTENTION.

BUT ALTHOUGH HE CAN'T REMEMBER WHY, HE ARCS HIS HAND TOWARD HIS TONGUE AND DRINKS--

TREMORS OF NAUSEA STILL SLIDE WITHIN HIM, AS HE ROLLS TOWARD HIS PARTNER.

PRAY GOD I'M IN TIME!

PLEASE, SAM...

PLEASE...

THEN COLOR RETURNS TO SAM WILSON'S CHEEKS...AND BREATHING STEADIES INTO A REGULAR THING...

...WHICH IS WHEN STEVE ROGERS' BREATHING STEADIES, TOO.

A LOOK--ONLY ONE--PASSES BETWEEN THEM. FOR THEY ARE MEN, AND MORE WOULD EMBARRASS.

BUT THEY KNOW WHAT'S LEFT UNSAID.

AND OTHER THINGS MUST BE DONE.

THE VIPER'S LONG GONE, SAM. WE'D NEVER CATCH HIM.

BUT MAYBE YOU CAN TRACE HIM SOMEHOW.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, STEVE?

THIS ALL BEGAN WHEN THE POLICE COMMISSIONER ASKED ME TO INVESTIGATE A COWLED COMMANDER--

--WHO'S RIDDLED THE DEPARTMENT WITH GRAFT. I THINK A KEY WITNESS COULD BE SGT. MULDOON--

AND IF THE COWLED COMMANDER FEELS THE SAME WAY...

GOT IT, STEVE.

AND... WELL, YOU KNOW.

SEE YOU LATER.

ALL THE WAY TO QUEENS, CAPTAIN AMERICA SIFTS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THIS CASE--

--AND ON BALANCE, DECIDES HE DOESN'T KNOW ONE HECK OF A LOT.

PERHAPS HE WILL LEARN MORE IN THIS MODEST HOME.

YES? OH HEAVENS!

CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE AVENGER, HUH? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR BITTERNESS, SERGEANT--BUT I'M HERE TO HELP.

YOU SEE, I HAVE AN IDEA YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER.

IT'S BEEN IN DANGER EVERY SINGLE DAY SINCE I JOINED THE FORCE! EVERY COP'S IS.

'COURSE, NOW THAT I'M OFF THE FORCE...

YOU KNOW YOU'RE SUSPENDED ONLY UNTIL AN INVESTIGATION CAN BE MADE. YOU WERE ACCUSED--

--BY KNOWN HOODS! AND THE COMMISSIONER WOULDN'T STAND BEHIND ME!

LISTEN TO ME: YOU MAY HAVE MORE TROUBLE THAN THAT! THERE ARE DEADLY FORCES INVOLVED IN THIS! THE COWLED COMMANDER--

THE COWLED COMMANDER! WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM?!

YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM?

HE'S A CRIME CZAR: THE MAN WITH NO IDENTITY! I HEARD RUMORS ABOUT BRIBES--MURDER--BEFORE I WAS CANNED!

I HAD BEGUN TO WORK ON IT--

--AND NOW I THINK I KNOW WHO HE IS!

IT'S PATROLMAN STEVE ROGERS!

HE DISAPPEARS FROM HIS *DUTIES*--CALLS IN *SICK* HALF THE TIME--AND HANGS OUT WITH THE *BRASS*, GETTING SPECIAL *ASSIGNMENTS*--

IF THAT'S NOT *CORRUPTION*, I'M A *PIG'S UNCLE!*

AND IF I HAVE TO PROVE IT *MYSELF*, TO ESTABLISH MY *INNOCENCE*--

LOOK, MULDOON. NO *VIGILANTE* TACTICS--ALL RIGHT?

WE'LL SEE.

AT ANY RATE, I WANT YOU AND *MRS. MULDOON* TO *COME* WITH ME TO A *SAFER* PLACE, FOR YOUR *PROTECTION*.

WHAT? NO! I WON'T BE DRIVEN OUT OF MY *HOME* BY THIS--ON TOP OF EVERYTHING *ELSE!*

WELL, I CAN'T *FORCE* YOU--BUT *PROMISE* ME YOU'LL TAKE CARE.

THAT PROUD *MAVERICK!* HE COULDN'T KNOW MY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR STEMS FROM STEVE ROGERS' BEING AN *UNDERCOVER AGENT.*

MULDOON'S REALLY TURNING *SOUR*--AND I CAN'T *BLAME* HIM. I'VE *GOT* TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING *SOON*--BOTH TO CLEAR HIM OF *CHARGES* AND TO CLEAR HIS *MIND.*

AND, FRANKLY, TO KEEP HIM FROM *CHECKING* ON ME.

SINCE I DISCOVERED WHY I HAVE A *SECRET IDENTITY,** IT'S ALL THE MORE *PRECIOUS* TO ME.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH *SPADE WORK* IT COULD TAKE FROM A TRAINED *PROBER*--

--AND I DON'T WANT TO *FIND OUT!*

*SEE *AVENGERS* #107. --ROY

*MEANWHILE, BACK IN *HARLEM*, A MAN IS HAVING A LONG *TALK* WITH AN OLD *FRIEND*...

REDWING--*SOMEHOW* I HAD IT IN MY HEAD YOU WERE *RIN-TIN-TIN.*

YOU KNOW: I WIGGLE MY *FINGER* AND YOU BRING ME THE *CAVALRY.*

I'M GONNA HAVE TO *TEACH* YOU BETTER THAN I *HAVE*, BROTHER BIRD--

--IF WE INTEND TO HOLD UP OUR END OF THE *PARTNERSHIP*, LET ALONE OUR *HEADS!*

THERE'S SOMETHING *MORE* BETWEEN US THAN IF YOU WERE JUST *TRAINED*--

--BUT THERE'S GONNA BE MORE *STILL!*

GOOD *AFTERNOON,* BIM...QUINT. I'M HERE TO SEE *MORGAN* AGAIN.

OH *CRIPES!* IT'S THE *BOY SCOUT!*

OKAY, FALCON. I AINT WORKIN' UP NO LATHER ON *YOU* ANY MORE.

'SIDES, MR. MORGAN SAYS IT'S *COOL*--YOU WALK RIGHT IN, *ANY* TIME.

PRIVATE

MR. MORGAN SAYS HE *LIKES* YOU, FALCON--

--BUT *YOU* DON'T SHARE HIS TASTES. MY HEART *BLEEDS* FOR YOU, QUINT, IT REALLY *DOES.*

BANG!

QUINT, A THOROUGH *THUG,* DARTS A HAND FOR HIS *GUN.*

BIM STANDS FROZEN.

BUT THE FALCON--AH, THE *FALCON*--

THE FALCON IS **THERE,** WHERE HE **SHOULD** BE--

COMING AT THE SNIPER LIKE A BLACK **TORNADO--**

BATTING THE **GUN** AWAY WITH A FURIOUS **SWEEP--**

--AND THEN **BACKHANDING** HIS ASSAILANT INTO THE CARPET ON THE **RETURN!**

KLUD!

TALK TO ME, BILLIE! TELL ME **WHY!**

YOU--YOU **OUTCLASSED** ME TWICE... MR. MORGAN FIRED ME AS HIS **BODYGUARD...**

YOU STUPID **PUNK!**

MORGAN, I'VE REALLY **HAD** IT WITH YOUR **ALL-LOSERS SQUAD** OUTSIDE!

BILLIE NEARLY **VENTILATED** ME!

YEAH, IT **FIGURES!** HE **HATES** YOU...

...AND ANYBODY **ELSE,** HE WOULDN'T'A BEEN SO NERVOUS AS TO **MISS!**

QUINT, YOU AND YOUR ***SLEEPING BEAUTY FRIEND*** MAKE SURE BILLIE HASN'T BOOSTED THE ***SILVERWARE***, AND THEN GET HIM OUT OF MY ***HOUSE***!

--AND DON'T COME BACK ***YOURSELVES***, IF YOU CAN'T GUARD MY ***VISITORS*** ANY BETTER THAN ***THAT***!

MAKE SURE HIS ***HEALTH*** STAYS UNIMPARED, TOO, BOYS--I'LL ***CHECK*** ON IT!

GROW ***UP***, FALCON. NOBODY TAKES ANYBODY FOR ***RIDES*** ANY MORE.

NO.? WHAT ABOUT THAT ***GANG WAR*** BETWEEN ***DR. OCTOPUS*** AND ***HAMMERHEAD***.?* AND THAT DOPER, THE ***PUSHER***.?**

THOSE BUMS.? THEY PLAY GAMES ***DOWNTOWN***. WE'RE ***CIVILIZED*** IN ***HARLEM***.

SURE--AND YOU'RE HEAD ***CIVILIAN***. THAT'S WHY I ***COME*** TO YOU.

I WANT TO KNOW WHERE A DUDE CALLED THE ***VIPER*** IS.

*SPIDEY 113-115.
**ASTONISHING 15-16.--R.

YEAH, I COULD ***TELL*** YOU, ALL RIGHT. IN FACT, I EVEN ***KNOW*** WHO HIS BOSS, THE ***COWLED COMMANDER***, IS.

BUT I'M ***NOT TALKING***.

YOU FAT ***FISH***! YOU'LL ***TALK***, OR I'LL--

NO, I--I ***WON'T***! YOU ***SCARE*** ME, FALCON, IT'S ***TRUE***--

--BUT I DIDN'T GET TO BE TOP DOG IN THE ***RACKETS*** BY SPILLIN' MY GUTS TO ANY ***COP***!

BEAT ON ME-- I ***WON'T*** OPEN UP!

YOU'RE SWEATIN' LIKE YOU RAN A ***MILE--UPHILL***--BUT I'LL BE ***BLASTED*** IF I DON'T ***BELIEVE*** YOU!

YOU'RE ***RIGHT***. YOU WOULDN'T ***GET*** THIS FAR IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A BACKBONE HIDDEN ***SOMEWHERE***.

I ***UNDER-ESTIMATED*** YOU, FAT MAN--

--AND I DON'T *LIKE* IT!

I'VE SAID IT *BEFORE:* I WANT YOU ON MY *TEAM.* NOD YOUR *HEAD* AND I'LL TELL YOU *ANYTHING* YOU WANT TO KNOW.

BUT THEN IT WOULDN'T DO ME MUCH *GOOD,* WOULD IT?

THEN I'D BE THE FAMILY *DOG,* BARKIN' BUT NOT *BITIN'* AND STRANGLIN' ON *YOUR LEASH!*

PR

NO

CHANCE!

THAT LITTLE DIALOGUE WASN'T SO *UNPRODUCTIVE AFTER ALL,* REDWING.

IF *MORGAN* KNOWS WHERE THE VIPER IS, I CAN *FIND OUT!*

CLEAN

SKREE

WHILE AT THAT MOMENT, AS CAP MOVES OVER THE CITY-SCAPE...

FUNNY HOW *GOOD* I FEEL, CONSIDERING HOW CLOSE I WAS TO *DEATH* JUST HOURS AGO.

THAT ANTIDOTE MUST BE POWERFUL *MEDICINE...*

KRAK

BANG

SHOTS!

A *BANK ROBBERY--* BUT NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT!

AND I'M BETTING I *CAN!*

GOT TO HAVE *SPEED*-- SO I CAN'T GO TAKE AN *ELEVATOR!*

BUT THIS IS THE PART OF THE "*BASIC SUPERHERO EXERCISES*" THAT BOGGLES MY MIND:

LEAPING INTO THIN *AIR*, AIMING FOR A SLIM METAL *POLE*--

--*SPINNING* ON IT AND *DROPPING* AGAIN.

I WONDER IF THE *AVENGERS*--

SPPUNG!

--CAN APPLY FOR A GROUP-RATE *HOSPITAL PLAN?*

MORE *LIKELY*, THOUGH--

CAPTAIN AMERICA!

--IT'S *THESE* BOYS WHO ARE GOING TO NEED ONE!

DON'T YOU PEOPLE KNOW BANK ROBBERIES ARE *PASSÉ?* WHY AREN'T YOU OUT CONQUERING THE *WORLD?*

CONQUERING *AMERICA'S* GOOD ENOUGH FOR *ME*--

--AND I MEAN *YOU*, HERO!

CURSE YOUR SHIELD! WHY CAN'T I BLAST YOU THROUGH IT? IT'S ONLY METAL.!!

SKLANG!

IS IT?

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!

SMASH!

BUT SUDDENLY, THE SNAPPY PATTER DESERTS CAP COMPLETELY, DRYING LIKE DUST ON HIS TONGUE...

GOOD LORD! WHAT'S GOING ON?

I'VE BEEN BATTING THESE HOODS AROUND LIKE PAPER DOLLS.!

BETTER WAKE UP, BUDDY--

--BEFORE I PUT YOU TO SLEEP!

THAT-- DIDN'T HURT!

NOT AT ALL!

AUTOMATICALLY, CAP MOVES INTO DEFENSE PATTERNS PERFECTED BY YEARS, DUCKING HIS HEAD TO AVOID A SECOND BLOW, FEINTING LEFT, SWEEPING BACK RIGHT WITH ALL THE POWER OF HIS MASSIVE ARM!

BUT TODAY--

--SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT-- DRASTICALLY DIFFERENT!

I...

...DID *THAT?*

NICE *WORK,* C.A. YOU MUSTA BEEN REALLY *MAD* AT THESE GUYS!

THOSE TWO WILL BE *OUT* FOR A WHILE!

...*I* DID THAT?

YOU *GOT* US, BIG MAN-- BUT WE'RE ONLY *SMALL* POTATOES!

THE *CRIME WAVE* HAS STARTED-- AND YOU'LL NEVER *STOP* IT!

THE CRIME WAVE? THEN THERE'S SOMETHING *BIG* BREWING--SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN I'VE *SUSPECTED!*

BUT NOW--OF *ALL* TIMES--AM I STILL SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF THAT *POISON?*

WHAT'S *HAPPENING* TO ME?

LET'S ALLOW THAT BURNING QUESTION TO ***SIMMER*** *IN OUR MINDS, WHILE WE LOOK A FEW BLOCKS* ***NORTH*** *TO THE EAST 60'S, MANHATTAN'S SECTION OF THE* ***SUPER-RICH.***

OKAY, REDWING: IF THE VIPER'S AN *AD MAN,* AND HE LIVES IN *TOWN--*

DRUGS

HERBS

DRUG STORE

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT'S AROUND *HERE.*

TO WHIP UP THOSE *POISONS*, HE'D NEED SPECIAL *CHEMICALS* --AND *HERBS*-- FROM SOME SHOP LIKE *THIS*.

IT'S WORTH A *TRY*.

AND A BIT MORE.

YES, I'VE SOLD WHAT YOU DESCRIBE, ALL TO *ONE MAN*--

--BUT I'VE KNOWN HIM FOR *YEARS*!

JORDON DIXON IS HIS NAME.

WITH THE NAME COMES AN ADDRESS.

RIGHT, MR. DIXON-- YOU'RE STILL ONLY A *HUNCH*--

--BUT I GOT ME A *FEELIN'* YOU'LL BE *MORE*!

SUNDOWN--AND SHOWDOWN!

WELL ALL *RIGHT*! HIT IT SMACK *ON*, THE FIRST *GO-ROUND*!

BUT I'M NOT FOOL ENOUGH TO BUST IN THERE *UNPROTECTED* AGAINST HIS POISON DARTS *THIS* TIME.

THAT ANTIDOTE WAS SO *STRONG* WE DIDN'T USE IT *ALL*--

--AND AN OUNCE OF *PREVENTION* IS WORTH A POUND OF *CURE*, OR ANYTHING *ELSE* YOU CAN NAME!

AVON CALLING, SNAKE-EYES!

KRAGGK

BLINT!

CRUD! THAT SNAKE COSTUME *FITS* HIM, ALL RIGHT!

HE'S QUICK AS ANY *BELLY-CRAWLER* I *EVER* SAW!

THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE *DONE*--AND YET YOU'VE *SURVIVED* MY FIRST ATTACK! *INCREDIBLE!*

BUT NOW I CAN *DOUBLE* MY PLEASURE--*DOUBLE* MY FUN--

--BY WATCH-ING YOU DIE A *SECOND* TIME!

UH UH, AD MAN. THAT *HURT*-- I EVEN FEEL A LITTLE *PUNCHY*--

--BUT NOT *HALF* AS PUNCHY AS *YOU'RE* GONNA FEEL!

OOF!

I WAS *READY* FOR YOU, PUCKER-FACE! WHATEVER MIRACLE *ADDITIVES* YOU CHUNKED IN YOUR ANTIDOTE--

--THEY *WORK!*

ANTIDOTE?

AH, BUT I HAVE A *CHOICE* OF FLAVORS, FALCON--A TOTALLY *SEPARATE* BLEND OF LIQUID DEATH--

--IN MY VIPER'S *FANGS!*

SKRAAK

AARRRGH!

THAT'S ONE STUNT YOU *ALREADY* KNOW, BROTHER BIRD--

--AND I THANK YOU *FOR* IT!

THUD

NOW HERE'S ONE OF *MINE!*

CLOM!

AND THE HITS--IF YOU'LL PARDON THE PUN--JUST KEEP ON *COMIN'!*

NOW THEN, VIPER:

YOU ARE GOING TO TELL ME WHO THE COWLED COMMANDER IS!

FOOL! I HAVE NO IDEA!

HE KEEPS HIS IDENTITY SECRET FROM HIS MINIONS, TOO!

AND EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE STOPPED ME--

--YOU'LL NEVER STOP THE CRIME WAVE, BECAUSE--

BUT BEFORE WE HEAR THE VIPER'S SNARLED REPLY, THERE IS A FINAL VIGNETTE TO BE PLAYED BEFORE OUR EYES.

THAT VIGNETTE IS DOWNTOWN, AT STEVE ROGERS' DOWN-AT-THE-HEELS HOTEL.

-UHHH!- MY HEAD! ALL OF A SUDDEN, WHEN I TURN ON THE LIGHT--

--I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN ON A TWO-DAY BENDER!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? FIRST I WAS SUPER-STRONG--NOW I'M DIZZY...SICK...

OH NO!

SOMEBODY'S SEARCHED MY ROOM!

WHAT'S GOING *ON?* AS THE *GRIM REAPER* SAID*, MY LIFE HAD *EVENED OUT.* IT WAS MOVING SO *WELL*...AND NOW IT'S ALL GONE *SOUR!*

NOK NOK NOK

GO *AWAY.* I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANY--

OH, *OKAY!*

*IN *AVENGERS #107* AGAIN--ROY.

MR. TRIMBLE. WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?

ROGERS, AS *MANAGER* OF THE CORINTH HOTEL, I GET TO KNOW A *LOT* ABOUT MY TENANTS.

LOOK, MR. TRIMBLE-- I'M REALLY NOT *UP* TO--

DON'T TRY TO *BROWBEAT* ME, ROGERS! THERE WERE *COPS* HERE TODAY, SEARCHING YOUR *ROOM*--

--WHICH YOU WOULDN'T *KNOW* ABOUT, SINCE YOU'RE NEVER *HERE!*

IT ALL GAVE ME AN *IDEA,* THOUGH--

--AND *I* THINK I'VE FIGURED OUT YOUR BIG *SECRET.*

YOU-- *WHAT?*

SURE. YOU'VE BEEN *MOONLIGHTING,* HOLDING DOWN A *SECOND JOB* OUTSIDE YOUR REGULAR *POLICE* DUTIES.

THE FORCE DOESN'T *APPROVE* OF THINGS LIKE THAT, I KNOW.

AND *I'VE* BEEN LOSING PRETTY *HEAVILY* IN LOUIE THE EEL'S *POKER* SOIREE, LATELY...

KNOW WHAT I *MEAN?*

YOU MEAN YOU WANT TO *BLACKMAIL* ME!

BLACKMAIL-- *SHMACKMAIL.* DID *I* SAY THAT?

'COURSE, A WELL-PLACED WORD *WOULD* START AN INQUIRY--THE CITY'S *BIG* ON POLICE INQUIRIES...

GET *OUT* OF HERE, TRIMBLE!

OKAY, ROGERS--AS A *COP,* YOU'VE *GOT* TO BE HONEST--

--BUT IT'S NOT AN HONEST *WORLD*-- AND I'LL BE *BACK!*

OH *NO!* WHAT A *MESS.* BLACKMAILED OVER MY *SECRET IDENTITY*--AND HE DOESN'T EVEN *KNOW* MY SECRET IDENTITY!

THROBBING'S EASED A *LITTLE* IN MY HEAD--MAYBE *FRESH AIR* WILL CLEAR IT ENOUGH TO THINK THIS *THROUGH.*

BOTH *MULDOON* AND *TRIMBLE* ON MY BACK TRAIL...

IT'S ABOUT *TIME* TO DECIDE WHICH IS MORE *IMPORTANT* TO ME: LIFE ON THE *BEAT* OR AS *CAPTAIN AMERICA*--

--BECAUSE *HAVING* MY CAKE AND EATING IT, *TOO,* IS LOOKING INCREASINGLY *UNLIKELY.*

BUT BEFORE I CAN *CHOOSE,* I HAVE TO UNCOVER THE *COWLED COMMANDER.* I'M *COMMITTED* TO THAT.

IF I COULD ONLY STOP FEELING SO *WEAK!* RIGHT NOW I COULDN'T OUTPUNCH A *KITTEN.*

THUNK!

GOOD *WORK,* SARGE--*THAT'LL* KEEP THE CROOK QUIET.

RIGHT, COURTNEY-- UNTIL WE *WANT* HIM TO MAKE SOME NOISE!

WE'LL TAKE HIM AND MAKE HIM *ADMIT* HE'S THE LEADER OF THIS DIRTY BUSINESS!

WE'RE GETTING TO THE *BOTTOM* OF THIS CORRUPTION *TONIGHT*--AND *TOMORROW*, THEY'LL *HAVE* TO TAKE ME BACK ON THE *FORCE!*

"HAVE TO"? THEY'LL THROW A *PARADE* FOR YOU!

THE BOYS ARE GOING TO *LOVE* PARING THIS *BRIBE ARTIST* AND *KILLER* OUT OF THE RANKS!

*TWO MEN--EMBARKED UPON A DESPERATE **COURSE** --AND KEEPING CAPTAIN AMERICA OUT OF **ACTION**--*

*--AT A TIME WHEN HE'S NEEDED **MOST**--FOR:*

*--**NEVER** STOP THE CRIME WAVE--*

--BECAUSE *I'M* JUST A *MIDDLE-ECHELON* TYPE. WHEN I DON'T *REPORT IN*, YOU'LL HAVE TO FACE--

"THE PLANTMAN!

"THE PORCUPINE!

"THE EEL!

"THE SCARECROW!

*"AND THE **FURY** OF THE*

COWLED COMMANDER!"

NEXT ISH, CAPFAN! BE HERE!

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CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON

HANG TOUGH, CAP! I'M COMIN'!

FORGET IT! I CAN TAKE ANYTHING THESE CLOWNS CAN DISH OUT--

--'CAUSE I'M STRONGER THAN EVER!!

BUT SO ARE WE, AVENGER! SO ARE WE!

IF YOU READ BUT ONE STORY THIS MONTH, IT MUST BE-- "TURNING POINT!"

Stan Lee presents: CAPTAIN AMERICA, and the FALCON™

STEVE ENGLEHART / AUTHOR | SAL BUSCEMA / ARTIST | JOHN VERPOORTEN / INKER | A. SCOTTO - LETTERER / STAN G. - COLORIST | ROY THOMAS / EDITOR

TURNING POINT!

YOU ARE THE *READER*, AND YOU REST *CONFIDENT* THAT THE PEOPLE LISTED ABOVE WILL DEFTLY *EXPLAIN* WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BECAUSE THAT *'S* THE WAY IT *IS!*

BUT *IMAGINE* FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN, THAT *YOU* ARE *CAPTAIN AMERICA*--THAT YOU HAVE NO ASSURANCES THE *"STORY"* WILL WORK ITS WAY TO A NEAT *CONCLUSION*.

IMAGINE THIS SCENE IS HAPPENING TO *YOU*, AND THAT YOU'VE *NO* WAY OF KNOWING *WHY---!*

NONE AT ALL.

ROGERS--

STEVE--

CAP--

STEVE--

DARLING--

CAPTAIN AMERICA--

ROGERS--

CAPTAIN AMERICA--

ROGERS--

SO TURN THE *PAGE*, SAHIB--'CAUSE THIS IS GOING TO BE *GREAT!*

THE MIND OF CAPTAIN AMERICA GROPES *OUTWARD*, REJECTING ILLUSION...SEEKING *ANSWERS* ...AND THE PHANTASMS OF HIS FRIENDS AND ENEMIES *VANISH* LIKE THE DREAMS THEY WERE...

...LEAVING *DARKNESS* UNDERCUT ONLY BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF *SELF.*

THEN A KNOWLEDGE OF *OTHERS* RETURNS, WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THESE OTHERS ARE *REAL* THIS TIME...

...BUT OTHERS WHO *HATE,* WHO *ACCUSE.*

THEN THEY *RESOLVE* THEMSELVES, AS *FACES* SPROUT AROUND THE EYES...

...*LONG* FACES, UGLY AND *MISSHAPEN*... TERRIBLE IN THEIR *INTENSITY*...

...AND THEN STEVE ROGERS *FULLY* AWAKENS, PULLING *UP* FROM THE OOZE OF *UNCONSCIOUSNESS.*

AND REGRETS IT.

C'MON ROGERS GET IT *TOGETHER.* WE DIDN'T HIT YOU *THAT* HARD, YOU TRAITOR!

TRAITOR--? WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT, MULDOON?

WHY HAVE YOU AND BOB GOT ME *TIED UP?*

DON'T PLAY *DUMB!* YOU'RE THE *COWLED COMMANDER,* THE BUM BEHIND ALL THE *CORRUPTION* IN THE *POLICE DEPARTMENT*--

--AND WE'VE PUT THE *GRAB* ON YOU TO MAKE YOU *TALK!*

YOU'RE *CRAZY!* I DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING* ABOUT THIS!

YEAH--AND YOU'RE A **LIAR!** I'VE HAD MY **EYE** ON YOU EVER SINCE YOU **JOINED** THE SQUAD--GETTING **SPECIAL TREATMENT...** ...SKIPPING **DUTY.**

MEANWHILE, US **HONEST** COPS ARE GETTING **SUSPENDED,** BECAUSE THERE'S SO **MUCH CORRUPTION** AROUND, EVEN **RUMORS** HAVE TO BE ACTED ON.

THAT'S WHY THEY **CANNED** ME, ROGERS--

--BUT WHEN WE'RE **FINISHED** HERE, YOU'LL BLOW THE **WHISTLE** ON THE **CROOKS,** AND I'LL BE BACK ON THE FORCE WHERE I **BELONG!**

BUT I'M NOT A **HARD** MAN. YOU WERE **MOANIN'** AND **GROANIN'** SO MUCH IN YOUR SLEEP, IT'S PROBABLY GONNA **TAKE** YOU SOME TIME TO PUT YOUR **HEAD** STRAIGHT.

SO YOU **SIT** THERE A WHILE-- AND TRY TO **FIGURE** WHAT ME AND COURTNEY ARE GONNA **DO** TO YOU.

BELIEVE ME, ROGERS-- YOU'RE **NOT** LEAVIN' HERE WITHOUT **CONFESSING!**

HE **MEANS** IT! THE BLOW TO HIS PRIDE HAS EMBITTERED HIM **COMPLETELY--**

--AND I **CAN'T** TELL HIM THAT MY STRANGE BEHAVIOR WAS DUE TO MY BEING **CAPTAIN AMERICA!**

I'M IN A **BAD SPOT.** THOSE MEN USED TO BE MY **FRIENDS--** BUT NOW THEY **HATE** ME--

--AND THERE'S SOMETHING **WRONG** WITH ME-- EVER SINCE THIS AFTERNOON I'VE BEEN FEELING EITHER REALLY **GREAT** OR SICK AS A **DOG.***

*SEE LAST ISH.--ROY.

THOSE **HALLUCINATIONS** BEFORE MUST HAVE BEEN AN **EFFECT** OF THAT ...BUT I DON'T **DARE** THINK ABOUT IT **NOW!**

WITH LUCK, I CAN FIND A **WEAK SPOT** IN ONE OF THESE ROPES, IF I **STRAIN HARD** ENOUGH, AND **ESCAPE!**

BUT EVEN WITH ALL THE LUCK IN THE **WORLD...**

...THERE'S NO EXPLANATION FOR *THIS!!*

IT'S...LIKE *BEFORE,* WHEN I CLOBBERED THOSE *BANK ROBBERS* SO EASILY!

FOR SOME UNKNOWN *REASON* I'VE DEVELOPED *INCREDIBLE STRENGTH!*

BUT A SURLY *MUMBLE* FROM THE OTHER ROOM *REMINDS* STEVE ROGERS THAT TIME IS *PRECIOUS*-- SO HE QUICKLY CHANGES HIS GARB--

--AND *CAPTAIN AMERICA* LEAPS FOR HIS *FREEDOM!*

HE CLAMBERS TO THE *ROOF*...ONLY TO FIND *MORE* COMMOTION IN PROGRESS *BELOW*--

N.Y. P.D.

PATROL CARS --AND TO THIS *PART-TIME COP* IT LOOKS LIKE EVERY ONE IN THE *PRECINCT!*

IT MUST BE THE *CRIME WAVE* THE BADDIES HAVE BEEN PREDICTING!

MULDOON AND BOB ARE *HARMLESS* WITHOUT ME--

--SO *I'M* GOING WHERE THE *ACTION* IS!

SIRENS SOUND LIKE THEY'RE CONVERGING *UPTOWN*--

--NEAR THE *DIAMOND DISTRICT!* THAT *WOULD* BE THE SPOT FOR A CRIME SPREE, OKAY!

BUT I CAN BE THERE WITHIN *MINUTES* BY TRAVELING *THIS* HIGH UP.

AND, TRUE TO HIS *WORD*...

I WAS *RIGHT!* IT'S A CROOKS' *CONVENTION* AND I RECOGNIZE THEM *ALL*--

THE *SCARECROW*, WITH HIS THIEVING RAVENS--

THE *PORCUPINE* --THE *PLANTMAN*--

--AND THE *EEL!* *

*LAST SEEN *TOGETHER* IN THE LATE, LAMENTED *X-MEN* #23.--RELIABLE ROY.

GOOD, THEN! WE HAVE ALL THE BAUBLES WE CAN *CARRY*--

--AND THE COWLED COMMANDER WILL BE *WAITING*. LET US LEAVE -- *NOW!*

HA! THE CRIME WAVE IS *SWAMPING* THIS COWERING CITY!

WE WILL LIVE LIKE *KINGS!*

ALL RIGHT --THAT'S *ALL* THE CLICHÉS I CAN *TAKE* FOR ONE EVENING.

TIME FOR ME TO GO TO *WORK!*

WHAT A LAUGH ON THE *LAW!* WITH THE PLANTMAN'S GIANT *VINES* BLOCKING BOTH ENDS OF THE *STREET,* WE ARE COMPLETELY *SAFE!*

SPRUNT!

PLOW!!

BASH!!

IS THAT YOUR *FINAL* OPINION, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO *RECONSIDER?*

CAPTAIN AMERICA! WE WERE *WARNED* WE MIGHT HAVE TO DEAL WITH YOU--AND I CAN'T SAY I'M *SORRY!*

ESENKOT

YOU *KNOW* WHAT TO DO, EEL, SO STOP *BAITING* HIM--

--AND *DO IT!*

RIGHT! I'VE BEEN *WAITING* FOR A CHANCE TO USE MY *ELECTRO-BLAST* AGAIN!

AND *I'VE* BEEN WAITING FOR IT, TOO -- SO I *DEFLECTED* IT WITH MY *SHIELD!*

BUT--THE PLANTMAN'S PULLED AN UNDERGROUND *VINE* UP TO *TACKLE* ME!

WONDERFUL, PLANTMAN! THE PORCUPINE OWES THIS MAN QUITE A FEW LUMPS!*

CAN'T MOVE-- THIS TWISTING PLANT'S GOT ME WRAPPED TIGHT--

*CAP # 130.--R.

--BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA IS NEVER HELPLESS!

MOREOVER, NOW THAT I'VE GOT A SECOND TO SPARE, MY SHIELD EDGE CAN CUT ME FREE!

FREE? HARDLY, CRETIN! ATTACK, MY RAVENS ATTACK!

MEANWHILE, NEW YORK'S FINEST HAS FOUND THE ROUTES TO 47th STREET AND ITS LOOTED JEWEL PALACES SNARLED INDEED.

HELP WILL NOT BE COMING FROM THIS QUARTER FOR A WHILE YET---

--BUT HELP IS COMING!

FALCON! FOR PETE'S SAKE, DON'T DROP ME!

DROP YOU, VIPER? AFTER YOUR TIP ON THE BIGGER AND BETTER BADDIES CAME UP A WINNER? NEVER!

REDWING! GO HASSLE THOSE CROWS!

WHILE, OBLIVIOUS TO ALL THIS...

POE HAD NOTHING ON ME!

ALL HIS RAVEN DID WAS KNOCK--BUT THESE ARE OUT FOR BLOOD!

STILL, HOWEVER *MEAN* THE BLACKBIRDS MAY BE--

--THE BIRD KINGDOM HAS EVOLVED *FEATHERED FURIES* THAT ARE *MEANER!*

IT'S *REDWING!* AND EVERYWHERE THAT *REDWING* FLIES, THE FALCON'S *SURE* TO GO!

HERE, MR. GREENJEANS --SAY HELLO TO THE *OTHER* LIME-COLORED LOSER IN TOWN!

I'VE GOT *BETTER* THINGS TO DO WITH MY TIME THAN CARRYIN' HIM AROUND--

--LIKE PUNTING THE *GREAT PUMPKIN HERE!*

BUNG!

POW!

OH NO! OH NO!

IT'S JORDAN!

YOU WISE-CRACKING *SLOB!* YOU'VE HURT MY *BROTHER!*

BRUTH---

THK

FALCON!!

NO USE! HE'S OUT COLD-AND HE'LL GET COLDER IF HE HITS THE SIDE-WALK FROM THAT HEIGHT!

HOW DO YOU MEASURE A MAN? BY WHAT HE WILL DO FOR A FRIEND?

NO, BECAUSE CAPTAIN AMERICA WOULD DO THIS FOR ANYONE--AND THAT IS HIS TRUE MEASURE!

THE EEL'S ELECTRIC BLAST, HAD IT BEEN GROUNDED, WOULD POSSIBLY HAVE KILLED THE FIGHTING FALCON--BUT SINCE HE WAS IN MID-AIR, THE SHOCK OF IMPACT IS ENOUGH TO KICK ASIDE HIS UNCONSCIOUSNESS, AND PUT HIM BACK ON HIS FEET.

BLAST! I'VE LET YOUR PLAYMATES SPLIT!

LET'S GET 'EM, CAP!

AND NOW THERE IS MOVEMENT IN ANOTHER AREA OF THIS ASPHALT PLAYING FIELD, AS NEW YORK'S DOUGHTY POLICE COMMISIONER TAKES A HAND.

CRASH THE VINE BARRIER FULL OUT, DICK! SEE IF WE CAN'T GET THROUGH!

OKAY, COMMISSIONER, BUT FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT! THIS'LL BE ROUGH!

WHO EVER DESIGNED PORKY'S OUTFIT BETTER GO BACK TO FASHION SCHOOL! HE CAN'T RUN FOR BEANS IN IT!

HE'S OURS, PARTNER!

N.Y.P.D.

SKREECH!

WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU *DOING*, YOU MEATHEAD!

YOU *CUT US OFF!* WE'LL *NEVER* CATCH 'EM *NOW!*

GENTLE IT, FALCON, OR I'LL SLAP A *MUZZLE* ON YOU!

AFTER PLOWING THROUGH THE PLANTMAN'S LIVING *FENCE*, I WAS IN NO POSITION TO BE STOPPING ON *DIMES!*

VAMOOSE, EEL!

CAP, I'M REALLY, *REALLY* SORRY! I SHOULDN'T HAVE ORDERED A *BREAK IN* RIGHT THEN.

HMMM... AND WHY *DID* YOU PICK THAT TIME?

COMMISSIONER... *COMMANDER*...

YOU EXCUSED YOURSELF FROM YOUR *OFFICE* RIGHT BEFORE IT *EXPLODED*, TOO..*

*CA AND F #157--R.

THERE'S A KERNEL OF THOUGHT WORTH *PLANTING*, TO SEE WHAT *GROWS*.

I *WONDER*...

OH *BOY*. FROM A MAN I'M SUSPICIOUS *OF* TO ONE WHO'S SUSPICIOUS OF *ME*.

HEY, SGT. MULDOON! WHAT'S *UP?*

JUST...OUT FOR A *STROLL!* SAY, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN PATROLMAN *ROGERS* LATELY, HAVE YOU? WE HEARD ABOUT THE *ROBBERIES*...

...THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAPPEN TO *BE* HERE.

AFRAID I DO'N'T *KNOW* THE MAN, SARGE. ANYWAY, WE'RE NOT RUNNING A *MISSING PERSONS BUREAU*-- WE'RE WORKING ON THE *COWLED COMMANDER* CASE!

WELL, YOU MIGHT SAY WE'RE TRYIN' TO *HELP*.

THAT'S FINE, BUT WE'VE ALREADY *GOT* HELP.

TO ME, REDWING!

ONE THING *NOT* INFESTING THE CITY IS *CROWS*...WHICH MEANS IF REDWING CAN *FIND* SOME, IT'LL LEAD US TO THE *SCARECROW*--

--AND TO THE *REST* OF HIS PLAYMATES.

GO, BROTHER BIRD!

CAP! CAP!

HEY, THAT'S *SMART!*

SHARON!

ABRUPTLY, CAPTAIN AMERICA RECALLS THAT HE'S BEEN *ON THE GO* SINCE THE AFORE-MENTIONED EXPLOSION, IN WHICH HE WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE *DIED!*

HE'S HAD NO *TIME* TO ALLAY THE FEARS OF THE WOMAN HE CARES *MOST* ABOUT IN THE *WORLD!* AN OCCUPATIONAL *HAZARD,* AND NOT A *PLEASANT ONE.*

EASY, HONEY, EASY. THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING SO *FAST...*

WHAT'S *YOUR* EXCUSE, FALC?

MISTER, *NOBODY* HITS THE FAL---

YOU!

OOO-*EE,* FALC! DO I LOOK LIKE A MISTER? YOU BEEN ON THE *FRONT LINES* TOO LONG!

HEARD THERE WAS A *HASSLE* HERE. FIGURED YOU'D BE *IN* ON IT.

LEILA, I'M *FLATTERED* YOU'D COME *DOWNTOWN* FOR ME--

HOLD IT! THE *BIRD'S* BACK!

I'LL HAVE TO *LEAVE* YOU AGAIN, DARLING. THIS COULD BE THE *BREAK* WE'VE NEEDED!

CAP! YOU SAID WE'D FIGHT AS A *TEAM!*

I WANT TO COME *WITH* YOU!

ME, **TOO,** MAN! LITTLE LEILA COULD REALLY GET **BEHIND** A GOOD BRAWL!

COUNT **BOB** AND **ME** IN ON THIS!

AND THAT'S WHY **NONE** OF YOU IS GOING. IT'S GOING TO BE TOO **DANGEROUS** FOR FALC AND ME TO WORRY ABOUT A CAST OF **THOUSANDS!**

I'M **SORRY,** SHARON--

I'LL TALK TO YOU **LATER.**

LET'S **MOVE,** FALC!

YOU'RE **ON** PARTNER!

SAM--

I **KNOW** WHAT YOU'RE GONNA ASK, STEVE. **MY** FEELING IS, IF WE TRIED TO BRING ONLY **SHARON--**

--THE **OTHERS** WOULD HAVE HUNG US UP IN AN ARGUMENT TILL **DAWN!**

I HOPE MISS CARTER **SEES** THAT.

SKAAA

LOT'S O' LUCK!

THAT HIGH-HANDED **SHOW-OFF!** DOES HE THINK HE'S GOD'S GIFT TO **CRIME FIGHTING?**

RAP **ON,** SISTER!

WE CAN KEEP 'EM IN **SIGHT!** I SAY LET'S **FOLLOW** 'EM!

WE LOST **ONE** LEAD TONIGHT-- LET'S NOT LOSE **ANOTHER!**

A TASK THAT WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT TO **SAY** THAN **DO--** EXCEPT THAT REDWING'S **GOAL** IS LESS THAN **TEN BLOCKS** DISTANT.

LOOKS LIKE WE HIT **PAY DIRT,** CAP!

THIS LOOKS LIKE **CLEAR SAILING**--AND, MAYBE MORE TO THE **POINT**, I FEEL **GOOD**. NO TRACE OF THAT **SICKNESS**.

I FEEL EVEN **BETTER** THAN WHEN I BROKE THOSE **ROPES**--

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "YOUR" **BROTHER**"?

HSST! IN THE ROOM **BELOW**, PARTNER

AND OUTSIDE EIGHT **EYES** PEER INTENTLY AT THE WAREHOUSE THEY SAW OUR HEROS CRAWL INTO--AND FOUR **BRAINS** PONDER WHAT THEIR **NEXT** MOVE SHOULD BE.

REMIND ME TO BUY REDWING SOME **BIRD SEED**, SAM.

HE DONE **DID** IT.

DON'T YELL AT **ME** SACK-FACE **I** DIDN'T KNOW JORDAN WAS WORKING FOR THE COMMANDER!

AFTER HE LEFT HOME AND CHANGED HIS **NAME** I THOUGHT HE WAS PLAYING IT STRAIGHT ON **MADISON AVENUE**!

YOU TAKE CREDIT FOR BEING **DROPPED** BY THE FALCON?

YOU **ARE** AN ADMAN!

BESIDES, IT WASN'T THE **MAN FROM GLAD** WHO WAS YOUR HANDY HELPER TODAY!

MAKE THAT "BAD MAN" AND YOU'LL BE CLOSER TO THE MARK, PORKY!

LOW BRIDGE, EEL! WATCH YOUR HEAD!

KLUNK

AND YOU TWO BOYS STOP FIGHTING!

CAP AND I'LL HANDLE THAT!

BAM!

PUNT!

THEN BATTLE ERUPTS ON ALL SIDES --BUT WHEN TWO MEN FACE FIVE...

...NOT EVERYBODY CAN BE WATCHED CONTINUOUSLY!

GOOD LORD! PLANTMAN'S CREATED A MAN-KILLER --AND IT'S KILLING FALC!

YET, BEFORE **CAP** CAN EVEN THROW HIS SHARP-EDGED **SHIELD,** A QUESTING FIBROUS TRUNK SMASHES HIM **DOWN,** CHOKING OFF HIS **WIND!**

ENOUGH, MY PET! WE HAVE NOT THE **AUTHORITY** TO KILL THEM--

--THOUGH YOU **YEARN** SO TO COMPLETE WHAT YOU'VE **BEGUN.**

BUT YOU, LIKE **ME**--LIKE ALL THE **OTHERS**--HAVE **HIRED** OURSELVES TO THE COWLED COMMANDER...

...AND MUST WAIT UPON **HIS** DECISION!

EVIDENTLY, THE FREAKISH FLOWER **COMPREHENDS,** FOR SOON, **CONSCIOUSNESS** COMES TO CALL ON CAP AND FALC AGAIN. THEY **DO** LIVE.

THAT'S THE **GOOD** NEWS. THIS IS THE **BAD** NEWS:

C'MON, YOU TWO-- SNAP **OUT** OF IT! IT'S TIME FOR THE **PAYOFF!**

THIS IS THE **COWLED COMMANDER** TALKING! I FIGURED IT WAS TIME I **INTRODUCED** MYSELF--

--SINCE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE ABOUT TO **DIE** AT MY HANDS!

FRIENDS?

YOU'RE IN A SOLID **STEEL** ROOM--AN **INESCAPABLE** ROOM--AND YOU CAN GUESS **WHY!** YOU TRIED TO STOP MY **CRIME WAVE**--

--YOU AND THE FOUR WHO **FOLLOWED** YOU HERE!

BUT NOW **IT** WILL STOP **YOU!**

DIE!!

HEY! HE'S GOT THE GIRLS--AN' THOSE **COPS!** AND... **WAIT!**

GAS --FROM THOSE **JETS!**

I'LL TRY TO **STOP 'EM** UP, **CAP!**

NO! YOU COULDN'T KEEP THEM CLOSED **FOREVER!**

HOLD YOUR **BREATH!** I'VE GOT A CRAZY, **IDEA** --BUT IT'S OUR **ONLY HOPE!**

CAP! IT'S NOT **POSSIBLE!**

YOU'RE DIGGING YOUR **FINGERS**...INTO FORGED **STEEL!**

IT'S...A **REACTION!** VIPER'S EXOTIC **HERBS** ... AND **CHEMICALS** STILL IN MY BLOOD... FROM THE EXPERIMENT THAT **MADE** ME CAPTAIN AMERICA!

MADE ME... **STRONGER!** TOOK... GETTING **USED TO!** NEARLY **KILLED ME..** ME AT FIRST...

BUT **NOW...** I CAN DO **THIS!** I **KNOW** I CAN!

EVERY MUSCLE, EVERY SINEW, EVERY **TENDON** STRAINS... ARCS... **STRIVES**...IN A NEW AND **DIFFERENT** WAY, **RIPPLING** BOLD AND PROUD UNDER THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE CLOTH...

...AND **THEN,** WITH ONE EXPLOSIVE **HEAVE--**

RRUMP!

JACK, THAT WAS **TRE-**FREAKING-**MENDOUS!**

THANKS--BUT I'LL **ADMIT** NOW--

--**YOUR** SURPRISE IS NO GREATER THAN **MINE!**

ANOTHER **TWO MINUTES** AND OUR ENEMIES WILL BE **DEAD!**

AND WE'RE THE **ONES!** OTHERS **TRIED**--BUT **WE KILLED CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON.**

WE'VE HEARD THAT SONG **BEFORE,** SCARECROW!

BOM!

WHAT--?

NOW IT'S TIME TO **FACE THE MUSIC!**

NO! I WON'T *BELIEVE* IT! I SEARCHED THEM *MYSELF!*

THEY HAD NO *WEAPONS*, NO *CHEMICALS*--THEY HAD *NOTHING* TO GET OUT OF THAT ROOM WITH!

WELL, YOU KEEP *RIGHT ON* NOT BELIEVING COMMANDER--

--BUT YOUR BOY *EEL* MAY FIND IT HARD TO *JOIN* YOU!

SKLANG!

THE *EEL* HAS BEEN A BUNGLER FROM THE *BE-GINNING!* THE *PLANTMAN*, HOWEVER HAS *NOT!*

AND WHEN I FIRE MY *RAY*--

SKREEE

DID I EVER TELL YOU THAT MY FALCON *HATES* GUNS, PLANTMAN?

DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU *NOW?*

POW!

STOP RIGHT *THERE*, BLACK MAN--OR THE HYDRAULIC *SKELETON* BUILT INTO MY INGENIOUS *COSTUME* WILL *CRUSH* YOUR FRIEND INTO A BROKEN *PULP!*

IN FACT, IT WOULD BE TO ALL OUR BENEFITS IF I DID IT ANYWAY!

BUT YOU WON'T, HANDSOME--

BECAUSE CAPTAIN AMERICA IS STRONGER THAN EVER!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS! THOSE CLOWNS SAID THEY WERE BIG, BAD SUPER-VILLAINS--THE KIND I'D NEED FOR MY LIEUTENANTS--

--BUT THEY'RE MILKSOPS, COMPARED TO THOSE CRIME-FIGHTERS!

WHILE THEY'RE FIGHTING, I'M TAKING A POWDER!

THE FALCON, HOWEVER, HAS LEARNED A LESSON FROM HIS PREVIOUS BATTLE! HIS BIRD-LIKE EYES HAVE CONTINUOUSLY SCANNED ALL CORNERS OF THE ROOM, AND NOW--

WHAT'S YOUR RUSH, C.C.?

GOOD WORK, PARTNER!

NOW LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT...WHO....IT....IS....

OH NO! HOW CAN IT BE-- HIM?!!

MULDOON!!

YOU TWERPS! IT WAS GONNA BE SO EASY... FOR AN OLD COP LIKE ME!

THESE DAYS THEY WANT A NEW BREED: COPS WHO CODDLE CRIMINALS! IT MADE ME ASHAMED OF THE FORCE!

AND STILL I LOVED IT.

SO I FIGURED, WHY NOT USE THE CRIME TECHNIQUES I HAD LEARNED BY FIGHTING CRIME, TO SPREAD BOTH CORRUPTION AND A CRIME WAVE.

THE PUBLIC WOULD DEMAND AN OVERHAUL OF THE DEPARTMENT AND WE'D GET RID OF THE WEAK SISTERS!

BUT IT BACK-FIRED. MY MANEUVERINGS STARTED RUMORS ABOUT ME, AND I WAS SUSPENDED.

IT... BROKE ME. ALL I WAS TRYING TO DO WAS IMPROVE THE DEPARTMENT--GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO RALLY AROUND, AN EVIL TO FIGHT--

AND GET RICH.

NOW, WHERE ARE OUR FRIENDS?

OVER THERE... IN THE CLOSET.

CRASH!

THEY'RE HERE, ALL RIGHT, FALC-- AND THEY'RE OKAY!

EPILOGUE...

THAT'S ALL THE COSTUMED HOODS, CAP. BACK FOR MULDOON IN A MINUTE.

NO--GO ON AHEAD, CARPENTER. I'LL BRING HIM.

SARGE, BOB SAYS YOU CAPTURED STEVE ROGERS TONIGHT. WHY?

HE WAS MANEUVERING, TOO --I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT I COULD TORTURE HIM INTO CONFESSING SOMETHING--ANYTHING --AND THROW ALL SUSPICION ONTO HIM.

I GUESS I BLEW THAT, TOO.

I DON'T KNOW, FALCON. HE SURE HAD ME FOOLED.

HE HAD US ALL FOOLED, BOB. AND HE ALMOST GOT AWAY WITH IT!

NEXT: SOLARR!

Captain America #155 cover production photostat
displaying Sal Buscema's original layout and backgrounds

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Captain America #153, page 1 original art
by Sal Buscema & Jim Mooney

CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON™

CAPTAIN AMERICA— HERO OR HOAX?

DUSTY DEWDROPS SMEAR THE BROKEN WINDSHIELDS OF ABANDONED CARS, AS THE DAWNING SUN TOSSES A PROMISE OF HEAT INTO THE HUMID, CHOKING AIR. OLD MEN SNIP THE TAUT COPPER WIRES WHICH BITE DEEP INTO THEIR DAILY NEWS WAKE-UP EDITIONS. DELICATESSENS FIRE UP FRESH BROWN COFFEE.

NEW YORK SNARLS HELLO TO ANOTHER SUMMER DAY.

CLOSE BY GRAMERCY PARK, THREE WEARY PEOPLE ARE JUST SAYING GOODNIGHT, BEFORE LEAVING THE FABLED CAPTAIN AMERICA TO HIS LONELY, RUNDOWN HOTEL ROOM, AND A LONG OVERDUE SLEEP.

NO WAY.

STAN LEE
Presents
STEVE ENGLEHART
WRITER,
SAL BUSCEMA
ARTIST
JIM MOONEY
INKER
JON COSTA
LETTERER
ROY THOMAS
EDITOR

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Courtesy Heritage Auctions

Captain America #156, page 1 original art
by Sal Buscema & Frank McLaughlin

CAP AMERICA #156 DEC

STAN LEE PRESENTS: CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND THE FALCON

TWO INTO ONE WON'T GO!

WE COULDN'T *POSSIBLY* TELL YOU EVERYTHING THAT WENT ON LAST ISH IN THE SPACE WE'VE GOT *HERE*--- SO IF YOU *MISSED* IT, GRAB YOUR TWIN DIMES AND RUSH RIGHT DOWN TO THAT LITTLE *NEWSSTAND* YOU KNOW THAT NEVER TAKES ITS OLD *COMICS* OFF SALE---

--- AND DON'T LET IT HAPPEN *AGAIN!*

SUFFICE IT TO *SAY,* HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A *SECOND* CAPTAIN AMERICA ON THE LOOSE---

--AND HE AND HIS PARTNER, *BUCKY,* HAVE CAPTURED CAP, FALCON, AND SHARON!

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT *THEY* THINK-- BUT NOW OUR HEROES HAVE *FREED* THEMSELVES---

--AND THE *SHOWDOWN'S A-COMIN'!*

STEVE ENGLEHART, *SCRIPTER*
SAL BUSCEMA, *ARTIST*
FRANK McLAUGHLIN, *INKER*
SAM ROSEN, *LETTERER* • ROY THOMAS, *EDITOR*

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BIOGRAPHIES

GERRY CONWAY

In 1969, 16-year-old Gerry Conway was shopping short stories to DC and Marvel for their horror anthology books. By 1976, Conway had worked his way up to Marvel's editor in chief. In between, he logged highlight after highlight as writer for both companies.

After establishing a pedigree with horror short stories, Conway quickly became the regular writer of *Daredevil*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Iron Man*. He also began runs on *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Thor*, picking up both titles from none other than Stan Lee. He scripted both for nearly 50 issues, writing controversial and classic tales including "The Death of Gwen Stacy," the first appearance of the Punisher, and the introduction of Harry Osborn as the Green Goblin. Cueing off his early interest in horror stories, Conway took advantage of Marvel's burgeoning line of horror comics, launching *Werewolf By Night* and *Man-Thing*, as well as writing the first issue of *Tomb of Dracula*.

In 1976, he was handed the top job at Marvel before transitioning to DC Comics. One of his first big assignments was writing the script for one of the first inter-company crossovers, *Superman vs. The Amazing Spider-Man*. Shortly thereafter, he began a long tenure on prime DC titles like *Superboy & The Legion of Super-Heroes*, *World's Finest* and *Wonder Woman*. He also introduced Firestorm with Al Milgrom in 1978, scribing all five issues of the short-lived '70s incarnation.

As the '80s dawned, he started a long run writing both key Batman titles, *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, and continued his run on *Justice League of America*, a stint that began in earnest in 1978 and would end with the dismantling of the infamous JLA Detroit in 1986. During this era, he also revived Firestorm with artist Pat Broderick; this time the title found traction and Conway wrote the first 53 issues. A return to Marvel in the late '80s saw Conway tackling two of the three Spider-Man titles: *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and *Web of Spider-Man*.

During this period, Conway was asserting himself as a writer in film and television. His early '80s screenplay collaborations with Roy Thomas resulted in the animated film *Fire and Ice* and barbarian sequel *Conan the Destroyer*. By the late '80s, his opportunities in television writing had expanded, and he left comics to pursue writing and producing for *Matlock*, *Father Dowling Mysteries*, *Diagnosis: Murder* and *Law & Order*.

Today, Conway continues writing and producing for television and has recently returned to script the occasional comic. He resides in California with his wife and their daughter.

STEVE ENGLEHART

He broke into the comic industry as an artist in the early '70s, but it was Steve Englehart's strengths as a writer that helped him chart a career in comics marked by the bravery with which he incorporated current political themes into his work.

One of Englehart's first principal titles was *The Avengers*, which he quickly made his own, introducing the character Mantis and exploring her exotic roots. He also took on *The Defenders*, Marvel's famed non-team, bringing Valkyrie into the mix. Only a year into his tenure as writer on these two books, he connected them for a three-month, six-issue crossover extravaganza—"The Avengers/Defenders War," one of comics' seminal crossover events. His run on *The Avengers* would extend for another four years, including the classic "Celestial Madonna" and "Serpent Crown" story lines.

Handed *Captain America* at the height of the anti-war '70s, Englehart turned the book on its head, tapping into current events like the Watergate scandal and creating a heady mix of adventure and politics. Stories like "The Secret Empire" and "Nomad," in which Steve Rogers abandoned Cap's costume and shield to explore what his identity really meant, were challenging takes on the time-tested character.

Other titles from his first tenure at Marvel included *Doctor Strange*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Hero for Hire*, and *Amazing Adventures* featuring the X-Men's Beast. He also introduced Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu, with Jim Starlin in the pages of *Special Marvel Edition* #15.

In 1977, Englehart headed to DC, where his "Dark Detective" vision of Batman with artist Marshall Rogers would later inspire filmmaker Tim Burton's approach to the first Batman feature film. He also had a memorable run writing *Justice League of America* before moving to other creative pursuits, including writing novels and developing video game concepts.

In 1983, Englehart collaborated with artist Steve Leialoha on *Coyote*, a groundbreaking independent comic. He returned to Marvel to establish a new title, *West Coast Avengers*, wrote the 12-issue limited series *Vision & The Scarlet Witch*, and long runs on *Fantastic Four* and *Silver Surfer*. In the midst of all this, Englehart wrote *Green Lantern* for DC, further developing the ranks of the Green Lantern Corps.

During the early '90s, Englehart was pivotal in the debut of Malibu's popular Ultraverse characters and also lent his talents to the Claypool Comics line. He continued with video game development and also wrote animation features like *G.I. Joe*. Recent comics work includes *Hellcat*, *Avengers: Celestial Quest*, *JLA Classified* and a return to Batman in the *Dark Detective* limited series.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and

Fantastic Four, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants*. His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

STEVE GERBER

If he had only been known for his work on *Howard the Duck*, Steve Gerber would still have been renowned as one of comics' most iconoclastic creators. After an unrewarding start as a copy writer in his native St. Louis, Gerber reached out to a fellow comics fan from his youth, Roy Thomas, and shortly thereafter began editing and writing for Marvel. He started on titles like *Iron Man*, *Sub-Mariner* and *Daredevil*, but it was his runs on *Man-Thing*, *The Defenders*, *Omega the Unknown* and *Howard the Duck* that defined his Marvel tenure as one of creative boundary pushing.

In *The Defenders* and *Omega the Unknown*, Gerber turned standard super-heroics upside down with his irreverent and sometimes inscrutable take on the genre. He took over Man-Thing shortly after the character's premiere as part of Marvel's early-'70s wave of monster titles, turning the tales of the shambling mass into a cult classic. And it was in *Man-Thing* that Gerber debuted Howard the Duck, the semi-autobiographical waterfowl that became an industry sensation and gave the writer a platform to share his sophisticated sense of humor and satire, gently and sometimes not-so-gently skewering politics, pop culture, and especially the comics industry.

A dispute over Howard with Marvel caused him to leave the company. It didn't stop him from returning to the character later in his career, but from the '80s on, his writing was mostly in animation and television, where he created *Thundarr the Barbarian* and won a Daytime Emmy as part of the team behind *The Batman/Superman Movie: World's Finest*. He also scripted *G.I. Joe*, *Transformers* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, as well as the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "Contagion." Gerber passed away in 2008 after a battle with pulmonary fibrosis. His career accomplishments won him induction into the 2010 class of the Eisner Hall of Fame.

JOHN ROMITA

Without question one of the most loved and influential artists to grace the pages of Marvel Comics, John Romita was born in 1930 and, fresh out of a fine arts high school, quickly joined the ranks of comic-book artists. Romita broke into the field at Atlas, the 1950s incarnation of Marvel Comics, contributing to their many war, Western, horror, and jungle adventure series, as well as the 1953-54 revival of Captain America.

After the 1957 Atlas implosion, he moved to DC, working on romance titles including *Secret Hearts*, *Girls' Love Stories* and *Young Love*. It wasn't until 1966 that he returned to Marvel and the super-hero genre in the pages of *Daredevil* #12-19, including a guest appearance by a certain friendly neighborhood Spider-Man. Having done such a confident rendering of Spider-Man in the pages of *Daredevil*, it was an easy choice to tap Romita as the new artist on what was fast becoming Marvel's most important title—*The Amazing Spider-Man*.

After a few issues struggling in the mold of Steve Ditko, Romita came into his own with a bold style regarded as one of the most iconic in comic-book art. John developed a look for Peter Parker and his world that would define the character for years to come. His more muscular and firm figure drawings added a bolder flair to the book, and his years of drawing beautiful women in DC's romance books paid off big-time with definitive renderings of Gwen Stacy and the introduction of Mary Jane Watson.

For the better part of the next seven years, Romita drew *The Amazing Spider-Man* (spelled at times by Gil Kane). He also did a brief stint on *The Fantastic Four*, being the first to draw the book after Jack Kirby's 103-issue tenure, and returned to Captain America for another acclaimed run.

It was about this time when Romita was anointed art director for Marvel. Though his responsibilities kept him from drawing a monthly series, John had perhaps an even greater influence over the look and feel of the line. In addition to drawing countless covers, he also designed characters from the Punisher to Wolverine as well as the Spider-Man balloon for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. He also trained the next generation of artists in Marvel's Art Department, known as Romita's Raiders.

Romita's stature in the field was recognized by his induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2002. To this day, though semi-retired, Romita steps up to the drawing board to lend his mastery of the medium to the occasional cover or story. Beyond that, though, the Romita legacy is in safekeeping with John Romita Jr., who is now—much like his father was at the height of his career—setting the tempo for the look of Marvel Comics.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS LIBRARY

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NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
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SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-5
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-12
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-8

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
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ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
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ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

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GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 150 JUNE
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
TRAPPED IN THE BOTTLES OF DEATH BY
THE NEW, SUPER-POWERFUL STRANGER!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 151 JULY
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
GET 'IM, SCORPION! THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST YOU!
MR. HYDE STRIKES AGAIN! THE SCORPION HANGS LOOSE!
PANIC ON PARK AVENUE!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 153 SEPT
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
GET UP, CRUMB--SO I CAN BELT YOU CLEAR TO--
HUH??
THAT'S ONE OF MY PEOPLE YOU'RE BEATIN' UP ON, CAP!
WELL, NOW YOU CAN WALTZ AROUND WITH ME!
CAPTAIN AMERICA--HERO or HOAX?

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 154 OCT
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE! CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST BE CAPTURED--OR DESTROYED!!
STOP HIM! IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!!!
WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 157 JAN
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
I TOOK CARE OF YOUR BUDDY, SHIELD-SLINGER--
--AND HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOURS!
"VENGEANCE!" CRIES THE VIPER!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 158 FEB
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
VIPER, AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO CAP AND ME--
FALCON! STOP! YOU'LL KILL HIM! AND IF YOU DO--!
THIS IS FOR KEEPS!
the CRIME WAVE BREAKS!

CAPT. AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
20¢ 159 MAR
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON
HANG TOUGH, CAP! I'M COMIN'!
FORGET IT! I CAN TAKE ANYTHING THESE CLOWNS CAN DISH OUT--
--'CAUSE I'M STRONGER THAN EVER!!
BUT SO ARE WE, AVENGER! SO ARE WE!
IF YOU READ BUT ONE STORY THIS MONTH, IT MUST BE--
'TURNING POINT!'

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